

popculture

ALL HAIL THE QUEEN

XXI CENTURY
RITA REPULSA
& POWER RANGERS
ARE HERE!

ALSO INSIDE:

TITANFALL 2
DEPECHE MODE
INHUMANS
PRIYANKA CHOPRA
GHOST IN THE SHELL
SPIDER-MAN PLAYLIST
BLACK MIRROR
THE NOISE OF TIME
DOCTOR STRANGE
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CHEMIST:
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BOLDER, BIGGER,
BETTER LEGENDS

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BEFORE LOGAN

THINGS TO
KNOW BEFORE
ROGUE ONE

+ 7 DEADLY SINS: TV-SHOWS YOU MISSED IN 2016, BUT YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE!

SOME HEROES AREN'T



TASHA BLACK

BORN... THEY'RE BUILT.



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ENTERTAINMENT FOR GEEKS

popCu!ture



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TWO YEARS BETWEEN TWO STAR WARS MOVIES SOUNDS LIKE REVENGE (OF THE SITH)

That's why *Rogue One*, a standalone story nobody expected, sounds like perfect medicine for that wound this december. The interest of the whole world is at a high point, especially since this is the first *Star Wars* movie that will contain the whole plot between you entering and exiting the theater. *PopCulture Magazine*, not being original at all these days, treats *Rogue One* of course, but we console ourselves that we're doing it from a different angle than the rest. Whether our approach is different enough or not, you can check for yourselves in the #BigOnes section.

On the other hand, we're proud to be among the first ones to write about the new *Power Rangers* movie slated for 2017. We had the luck that the author of our #CoverStory is one of the biggest fans of the franchise, so we believe that you'll be very pleased with what we have to offer. The responsibility was great, for it's not every day that the Queen personally poses for your cover.

During the final control of this issue, I noticed that we have too many lists, if that's even possible in popular culture. *Logan*, *Rogue One*, a specific list of TV shows you might have missed this year... all this was very interesting to put in numbers. Let's be frank – it's numbers that determine the future of our favorite movies and TV-shows, so that they're just a logical way for consummation.

Lists and numbers also mark the end of the year which is upon us, and while we're at it, what does your holiday binge-list look like? Don't look away, I know you have one ;)

See you next year,

Marin Milosavljevic
Editor in Chief





DEADLY SINS

7 DEADLY SINS:

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TV-shows you missed in 2016,
but you shouldn't have

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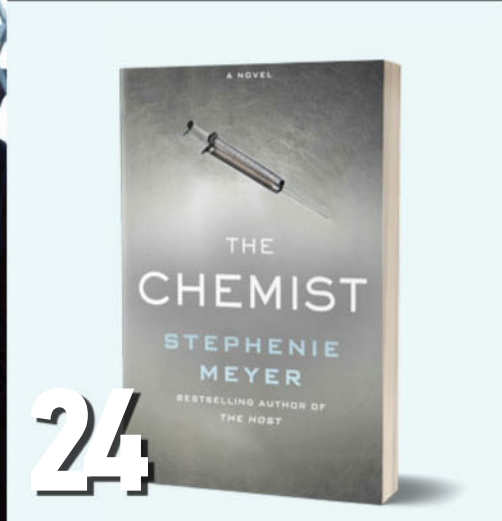
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POWER RANGERS

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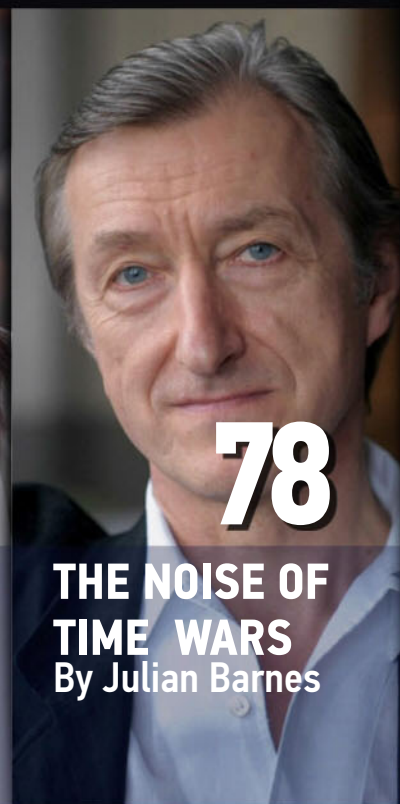
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by: Igor T.
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TITANFALL® 2

Hello. My name is Titanfall 2. The author of this article asked me to introduce myself personally, since I have to apologize for my older brother, Titanfall. I played the new Doom, Mirror's Edge and Half Life (which is the best game in the world) a lot, so I decided to make something similar. Let's start.

I am the sequel to the futuristic FPS that came out two years ago and though it made a big impression, it simply didn't last. My older brother had some cool revolutionary ideas, but he was lazy and greedy. I know our father, EA, was part of that, but my brother was too quick on the trigger and very, very non-productive. Because of him, it fell on my shoulders to fulfill the too great expectations of the players, but I think I managed it well.

My older brother, Titanfall, didn't have singleplayer mode. Yes, he claimed to have one, but talking in the background while playing multiplayer mode is, if you ask me, more of an offense than a campaign. I knew that's one of his bigger faults and I decided to fix that. My singleplayer campaign is from start to finish a FPS campaign, but on every corner, I try to be different from classic campaigns you're already used to. I'm linear, but so much fun. The game starts with training and with a generic and very non-interesting protagonist, Jack Cooper, who is a common soldier with a wish to become a pilot. Pilots are elite units, even veterans, with high fighting skills and that's why they can steer behemoths, robots we call Titans. The whole training is quick and it teaches you how to move on the maps, because that's the key to survival, but also very fun because you can do all sorts of acrobatics. After the training, you go to the front in the war as a common soldier and it's not expected of you to last long. You're hit and in some semi-conscious state you see your mentor dying and you're saved by his Titan BT-7274. You get your pilot uniform and you start one of the best FPS campaigns ever. The first levels sees you in a rocky jungle (yes, rocky jungle, get over it) where you additionally learn about moving, jumping, running along walls etc.

On first glance, I remind you of my brother, but I tried to work further on the good ideas he had. Meet BT-7274 Atlas Titan who deserves to be up there with the big ones like GLaDOS, Wheatly, ClapTrap and others. BT makes a connection with the player immediately and you care for the fate of your Titan. The only critique is – as good as the Titan is, Jack Cooper is that bad. All the humor the BT serves meets a very cold response by Jack. The voice actor didn't even try to convey any emotions at any time. It would have been better if he had been silent.



"THE PILOT'S GAUNTLET"
ABOARD THE MCS JAMES MACALLAN
APPROACHING PLANET TYPHON - IMC TERRITORY

As the campaign moves along I show more and more innovations, because every level is different. But I could repeat some of the mechanics at least once because they're fun. I think the best impression I make is with the "Effect and Cause" campaign. This mission can enter a list of best levels of any games in the history of games ever. The campaign is short but fun and it will keep you on the edge of your seat the whole time.

As for the multiplayer – I present you one of the best fast FPS multiplayer games nowadays. The moving through the maps is fluid and fast and first and foremost fun. The Parkour you have to do is beautiful and you enjoy every jump, every wall run, every slide.

The pilots are divided into classes, and every class has its powers. Powers can be invisibility, short-range teleportation, acceleration, sonar, or the best power – hook. The hook gives you such a mobility and new perspective that good players will be able to do unbelievable acrobatics and the frags will end up on YouTube. Every weapon has additional powers which can be unlocked during the game.

The crown of the multiplayer mode are of course the Titans and there are six of them. Every one of them is unique and has its own gameplay. The core of every Titan is important and when it's full, it has its own unique characteristics: laser, auto-aim,



flying, katana (it's almost a Genji ulti) and others. Every Titan has its own design and it's clear that every one of them corresponds to their own core. It is absolutely phenomenal when you call upon your Titan, and it falls through the atmosphere and crushes anything in its path when it lands.

The Titans are more durable this time and you can even fix them with new batteries. One of the multiplayer modes I would love to talk about is Bounty Hunt, where for every frag you get money you have to get to the banks. If you die, you lose all the money and the first one to reach \$4000 wins.

To keep my players, I promised

not to have Season Passes or paid DLCs, which is a big surprise if you remember who my father is. I hope you will play me for a long time and that my younger brother, Titanfall 3, will bring even more innovations into our family and make us better. At the end, the author would like to speak to you directly, too. Thanks.

Dear readers, there you have what Titanfall 2 thinks of itself and I have to say I agree on everything it said. Titanfall 2 is an evolution of its predecessor and I hope a ground to develop further sequels, which would give the genre some freshness. I absolutely recommend that you get your copy of Titanfall 2 and let's meet at the battlegrounds of Frontier.



PC PLAYERS WOULD RATHER WORK IN A FIELD THAN PLAY THE NEW CALL OF DUTY

Another Call of Duty is here and again we see the love/hate magic circle of reactions ranging from „this is the best game ever“ to „well, this got boring quickly“. But this year's release isn't doing well with PC players.

Aside from dividing the community on the base of where you bought it, Infinite Warfare gets harsh critiques for its performance (even on consoles, where the installation can last for hours) and generally that in multiplayer mode it doesn't offer much in a year, in which we saw several great FPS games.

The numbers of PC players went down and it's clear that the era of Call of Duty on PC is over. If a high budget game is outsold by games like Transport Fever, the publisher should be aware that he's doing something wrong.

THE COLLECTOR'S EDITION OF RESIDENT EVIL 7 HAS A WHOLE HOUSE

The biggest fans of Resident Evil will be able to add a replica of the house of horrors from the upcoming Resident Evil 7. Resident Evil 7's collector's edition will be available for the PlayStation 4 and Xbox One versions of the game. In addition to a copy of the game and the mansion music box — which plays a sample of the game's version of “Go Tell Aunt Rhody” — the collector's edition version will include a 4 GB USB drive in the shape of the game's mysterious dummy finger, an exclusive SteelBook metal case, a VHS tape box, a lithograph featuring the Baker family and a “creepy note.” Resident Evil 7 is slated for January 24th 2017.

TOTAL WAR IS HEADING FOR A NEW ERA

The Total War series of games has so far focused on different time periods — Ancient Rome, Middle Ages, feudal Japan and even the Warhammer Universe. But the Creative Assembly Studio has more ideas for the game. Speaking to Eurogamer, CA's Rob Bartholomew said the next Total War (currently in pre-production) will take place in “an era we haven't tackled yet”, with creative director Mike Simpson driving the point home: “Yes... It's not something we've done before.”

**IMAGINE
INCREDIBLE**
COMICS



**COMING SOOON TO
KICKSTARTER**

LIGHTSTEP

CHRONICLES



imagineincredible.com

#HOT START

by: Goran T.
goran_t@popculture.dk



IMAGE: Courtesy of MCF, Belgrade, Serbia

16 STORIES YOU MUST READ BEFORE WATCHING

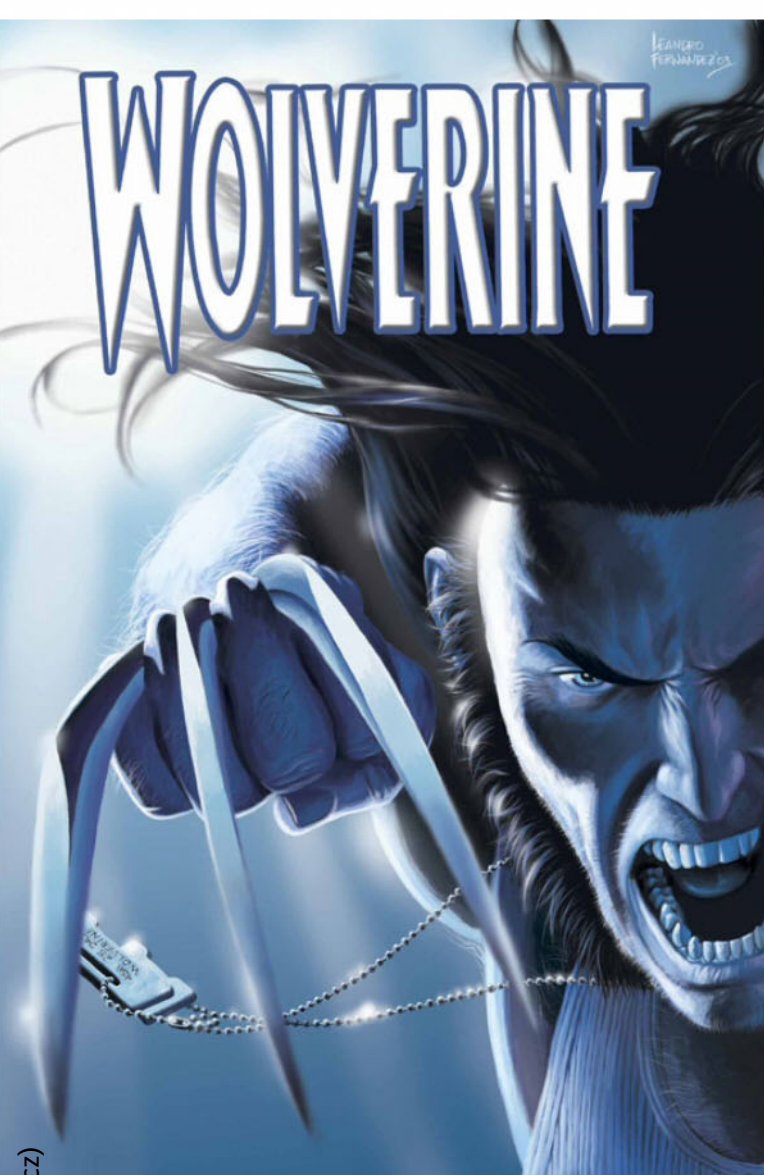
LOGAN

The movie is based on the famous storyline “Old Man Logan”, but only loosely, so you don’t need to run and read it if you’re too eager to see what the movie is about.

From all the superhero movies that come out next year, only one stands out really. Well, ok, two, if we count Spider-Man’s debut under Marvel Studios. The second one is of course the most famous Marvel mutant known as Wolverine. Next year we get his third solo movie titled simply “Logan”. The movie is also special because this will be the last time we see Hugh Jackman in the role that made him famous 16 years ago, as well as Patrick Stewart

as Professor Xavier. That alone guarantees a farewell party worth remembering. The movie is based on the famous storyline “Old Man Logan”, but only loosely, so you don’t need to run and read it if you’re too eager to see what the movie is about. But you can read it along other storylines we’ve picked out for you. These are stories that describe the character and work of Wolverine best and show us why exactly he’s the best at what he does.

WOLVERINE



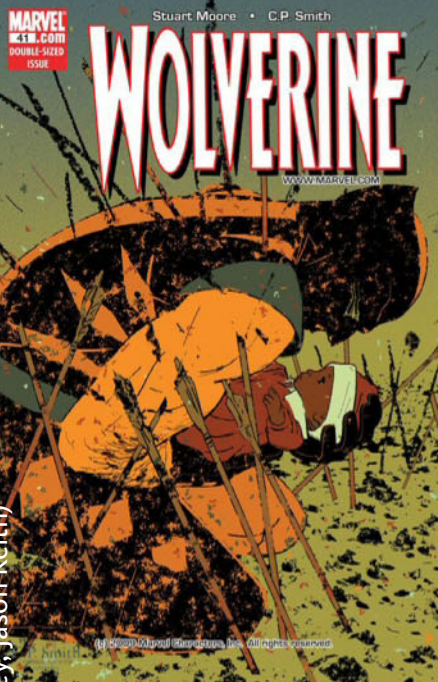
THE BROTHERHOOD (*WOLVERINE VOL. 3 #1-5*) COYOTE CROSSING (*WOLVERINE VOL. 3 #7-11*)

It was hard to pick which of these stories to put on the list, because none of them works without the other. In the first part of the story, which was written by Greg Rucka, we see Logan amidst an unsolved murder and he's the only one who can solve it and debunk a secret band. While the first part is action-oriented, the second one has a slower pace and shows us that Logan can also be calm and show his human side when necessary. Especially in front of his enemies.

24 HOURS (*WOLVERINE VOL. 2 #10*)

This short story by Chris Claremont takes us through Logan's past and present when he brutally clashed with Sabretooth. His dominance over Logan in this story shows us that Sabretooth is his greatest enemy. In the conflict with him, Logan confronts fear and the feeling of helplessness and vulnerability, which is disturbing for a character like Logan. Some elements from this story were used in his first solo movie, and I can say that's the only good thing about that movie.





THE PACKAGE

(WOLVERINE VOL. 3 #41)

In this story we watch Logan travel to Africa to do Black Panther a favor.

A simple mission: lead a young girl out of her country, over the border and to a safe place. Easier said than done, of course.

The writer made Logan go through hell in this episode. The pain he goes through can also be seen in the excellent noir drawing. The whole story is under a veil of tragedy, but the fact that Logan comes out in the end says a lot about him.

MADRIPOOR KNIGHTS

(UNCANNY X-MEN #268)

In this story we see one of his adventures from World War II, together with Captain America and Black Widow.

In a time where mutants were a world for themselves, it was a real treat to see Logan and his interactions with other characters from the Marvel universe. In this issue, Claremont expanded on his history in Madripoor, an island that had influence on his life.

The art by Jim Lee is worth every praise here, because he defined the look of the modern Wolverine. Of all the X-Men comics Lee drew in the late 80s and early 90s, this is definitely one of the best.



GET MYSTIQUE!

(WOLVERINE VOL. 3 #62-65)

This story serves as an epilogue for the Messiah Complex storyline and shows Logan in his hunt for Mystique after she betrayed the X-Men. Unlike Messiah Complex, this story is concentrated only on Logan and Mystique. Aside his hunt for her, we see flashbacks of them robbing banks together in the style of Bonnie and Clyde. We can exactly see how their relationship escalated during the years and how they were destined to fight almost to the death.



WOLVERINE: ALONE (X-MEN #132)

This time we're not talking about a whole storyline, but only a piece of the famous „Dark Phoenix“ saga by Chris Claremont, where we see Logan REALLY doing what he does best. I know I keep repeating myself, but in this case it's the truth. In the previous issue he was left for dead and in this one he gets up and goes ALONE through the whole Hellfire Club to rescue his friends from their enemies. Here we see what he is capable of, even in situations that seem impossible to get out.

FATAL ATTRACTIONS (X-MEN #25, WOLVERINE #75)

During the 90s, many characters in the comic books had some kind of metamorphosis that shaped the future. In Logan's case that was a conflict with Magneto, who uses his magnetic powers to extract all the adamantium out of Logan's skeleton. For some time, until the writers had enough, Logan was adamantium-free. Which was totally ok, because it turned out that he's got bone-claws as part of his skeleton. But in spite of that, that conflict and the loss of his adamantium influenced Logan and his team of X-Men.





VICIOUS CIRCLE (INCREDIBLE HULK #340)

In a fight against a grey and brutal Hulk, the government decides to call upon an equally brutal Logan for help. His mission was to stop the Hulk from making more of a damage than he already had done, but it turned out not to be that easy. The end result was one of the most brutal and bloodiest battles we'd seen to date and which was drawn by a back then unknown Todd McFarlane.

NEW MUTANTS PART 2 (ULTIMATE X-MEN #41)

Logan of the parallel universe known under the handle of „Ultimate“ is more dangerous, more furious and gets his claws out way easier than in the „regular“ one. In this case we also see his tragic side.

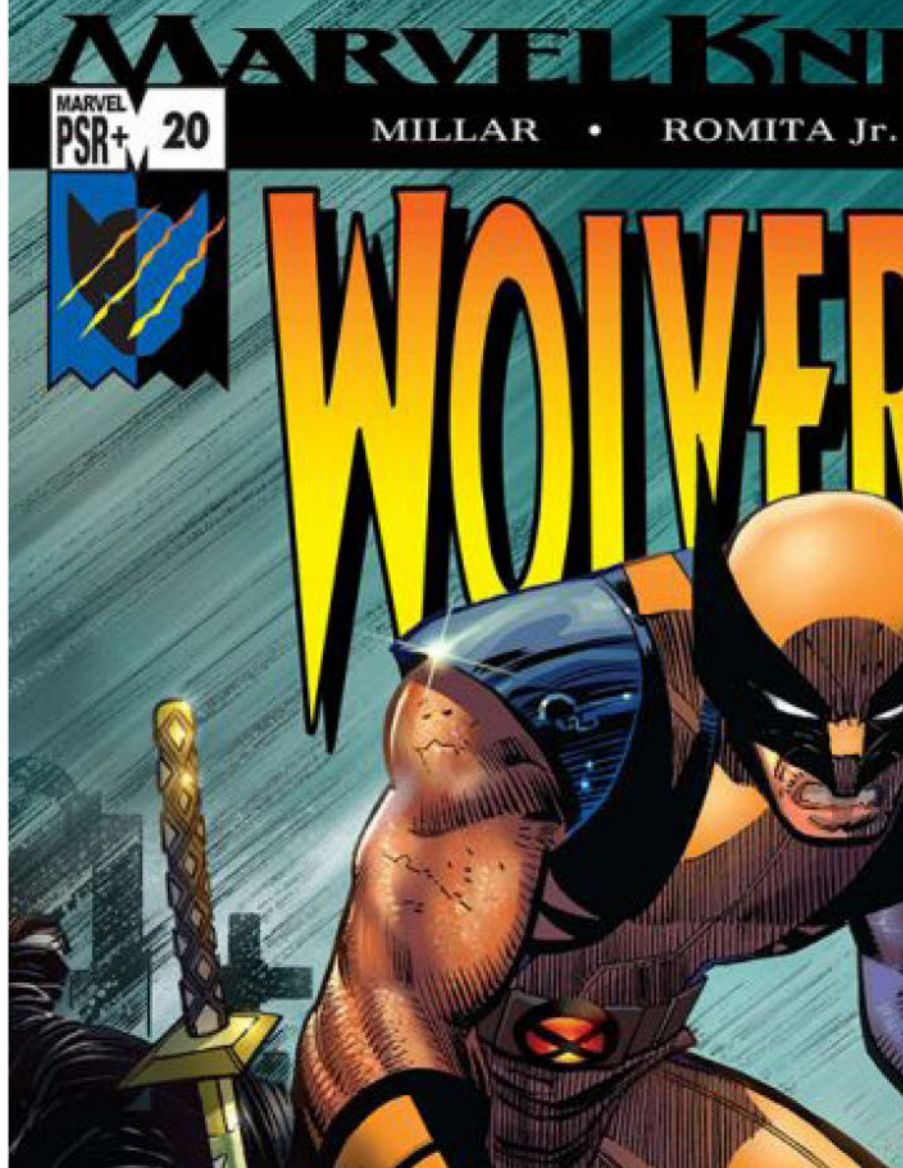
Though this is part 2 of 6 of a larger storyline, written by Brian Michael Bendis, this part can be read as a standalone story. It revolves around a teenager who has the power to kill anyone who comes too close to him, but unconsciously. Nick Fury sends Logan to meet the teenager as the only solution to the situation.

The end is totally predictable, but this makes the story no less effective. This story is one of the darkest Logan stories ever.



MARVEL COMICS
LOGANVAUGHAN • RISSO • WHITE
Issue number one of three**LOGAN**
(LOGAN #1-3)

The Logan mini-series is one of those stories that catches you right somewhere near the end, and the man behind it is Brian K. Vaughan. The story begins after the House of M storyline, in which Logan regained all memories of his previous life. He returns to Japan to finish something he had started a long time ago, and the story leads us through his past and present while he tries to confront his memories from the time when he was a prisoner in World War II. This is hardly the first time Logan travels to Japan to finish something he had started and hardly the first time we see his doomed romance with a beautiful Japanese girl. Though those parts are already known from his older comics, Vaughan managed to finish the story perfectly, like only he can.

**ENEMY OF THE STATE**
(WOLVERINE V3 #20-31)

If you've ever wondered whether Logan would stand any chance as a villain against his teammates, this is a story for you.

In this story, penned by Mark Millar, HYDRA brainwashes Logan into attacking his friends. Shortly after that his name becomes terror amongst superheroes. Millars story offers Logan the opportunity to test his abilities against some of the best heroes Marvel has to offer. Maybe not the best Logan story, but it's really fun and reminds us that Logan really is the best at what he does.

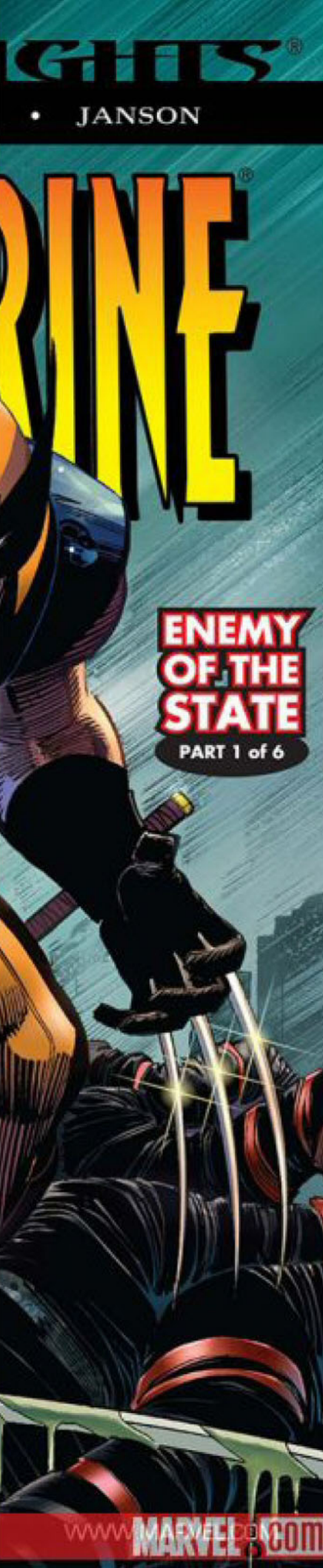


IMAGE: Courtesy of Marvel Comics (Eduardo Risso, John Romita Jr., Allen Milgrom, Steve McNiven, Dexter Vines, Morry Hollowell)

KITTY PRYDE AND WOLVERINE

*(KITTY PRYDE AND
WOLVERINE #1-6)*

The unofficial sequel to Claremont's mini-series about Logan shows us his old sensei Ogun and readers can finally see here what turned him into a person always up for a fight and a few drinks on the way. Other than his other stories in Japan, this one has a fresh approach in the form of his protégé – Kitty Pryde.

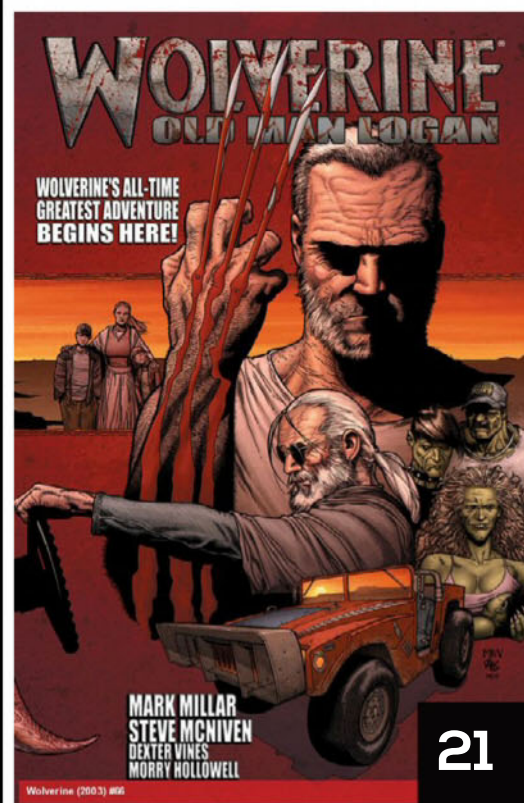
Logan is known for taking young female students as his own protégé's, so that we see the transformation of Kitty Pryde here, as well as her relationship to Logan. She turns from a naïve X-Girl into a Ninja sure of herself and her abilities.

OLD MAN LOGAN

*(WOLVERINE VOL. 3
#66-72, WOLVERINE
GIANT SIZED OLD
MAN LOGAN)*

Mark Millar brings us again Logan at his best, but in the worst possible time. In an awful dystopian future where all villains joined forces and killed all superheroes to rule the world, we see a Logan who doesn't call himself the Wolverine anymore. In the course of the story we learn that he vowed not to use his claws anymore and why.

The story is great but not suited for the faint hearted, because it's choke full with bloody scenes. It reached cult status amongst fans and this is a really logical choice for source material for the last solo movie about Logan.



ORIGIN

ORIGIN (WOLVERINE: ORIGIN #1-6)

In this mini-series readers can discover the details of Logan's life before he became an X-Man, that is details from his childhood. Some of you will feel that these stories are familiar because they were used in his first solo movie, but don't worry, the story in the comics is much better.

This is a story about a young man whose family life endured a tragedy and he has to confront himself. The story shows how deep his virtues and flaws go, and how he makes the same mistakes in love and tries to overcome himself and his wild instincts.

PART II OF V
INNER CHILD
JENKINS KUBERT ISANOV

Quesada
2004
ISANOV

WEAPON X

(MARVEL COMICS
PRESENTS #72-84)

This story is a very important part of Logan's past. Here we see the Weapon X program that made Logan into the animal and killing machine called Wolverine in detail.

The story by Barry Windsor-Smith is specific because we don't see it unfold from Logan's POV, but from his kidnappers' who run the Weapon X program. Some details were used in the X-Men Animated Series and in the movies, but that's nothing compared to what expects you in this story, which seemingly falls into the horror genre.

WOLVERINE

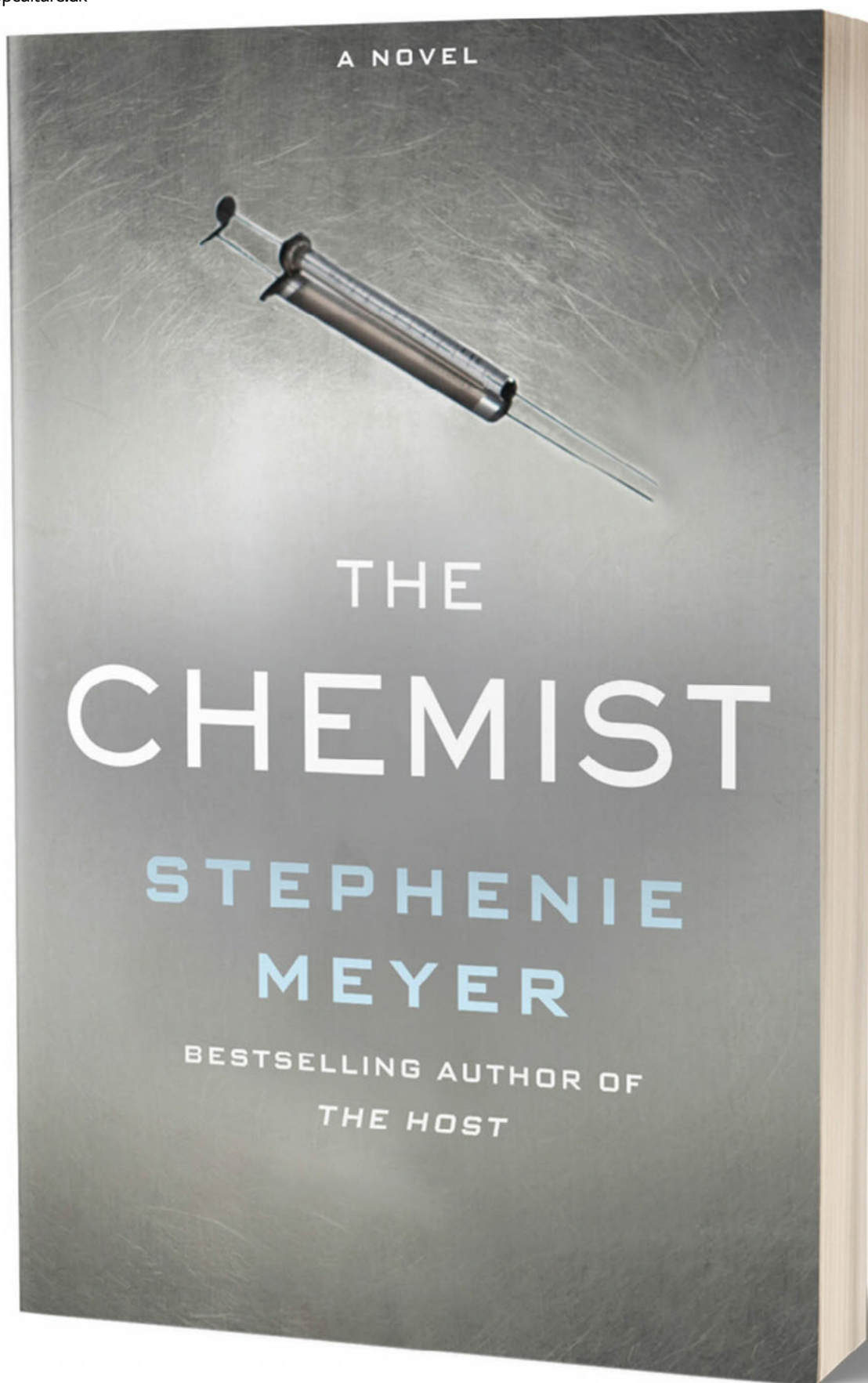
(WOLVERINE
VOL. 1 #1-4)

Logan's first ever solo story was done by Chris Claremont and Frank Miller. Claremont imagined Logan as a fallen samurai in search for redemption. His search brought him for the first time to Japan, where he fought the cruel Lord Shingen for the love of his daughter Mariko. This story might seem like "nothing special", but later you can see the influence it had on the character.

What this storyline is known for, except the now iconic line "I'm the best at what I do..." is the extraordinary art by Frank Miller. As much as Chris Claremont introduced a revolution to Logan's character, Miller cemented his look, which many artists tried to copy later on.



by: Marin M.
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THE CHEMIST

by Stephanie Meyer

WHAT COMES AFTER VAMPIRES?

It's no holiday if you're not under a blanket, amongst candles and the smell of pine trees, with a cup of your favorite hot drink in one and a good book in the other hand. If you were once one of the kids who waited in line for the new Twilight book, author Stephanie Meyer took care of this holiday season, too.

OK, the new book by Stephanie Meyer isn't really your typical YA novel, and critics put it easily amongst thrillers, but it's clear which group of readers will storm the bookstores when they hear the name of the author. Twilight fans have waited for too long for the guru of modern vampire literature to come back, and it seems that this return – though in an unexpected format – is really in great style.

If someone even could say that Bella Swan is a passive, weak human female, clinging to her vampire male partner, letting him do to her what he wants to, the protagonist of Meyer's new book *The Chemist* is all but different from that. She is a medical expert and professional interrogator who, for the not so public sector of the US government, tortured terrorists for the greater good, until the tables turned and she became the fugitive. The nickname Chemist she got because of the substances she used during interrogation – a cocktail of strong, painful drugs, which would make her prisoners tell the truth and only the truth.

Our heroine is very self-conscious: "I am the bogeyman in a very dark and scary world", she says at one point. "I frighten people who aren't afraid of anything else, not even death. I can take everything

they pride themselves on away from them; I can make them betray everything they hold sacred. I am the monster they see in their nightmares."

How and why Alex (a pseudonym she uses when we first meet her in the book) takes on a new case and gets herself into what the main plot of the book is – we'll leave that to your hungry reader's eye to discover for yourself, but we liked the novel a lot and the turn in genres reminds us pleasantly of J. K. Rowling and her Cormoran Strike series, though this, to be frank, isn't the first adult novel by Meyer. After *Twilight*, she has written the sci-fi novel *The Host*. But with *The Chemist* she breaks all the connections with the genre that made her popular and the only critique we can have is how the protagonist, introduced to us as a determined, somewhat cruel and very focused young woman, falls in the "love at first sight" situation. This is a signature move for Meyer and it's not necessarily bad, but in this novel it's not really needed. But Alex is miles and miles away from Bella Swan.

The nickname Chemist she got because of the substances she used during interrogation – a cocktail of strong, painful drug.



by: Michel P.
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DEPECHE MODE

THE PIONEERS OF ELECTRO SOUND *STRIKE BACK!*

DEPECHE MODE ANNOUNCE THEIR "GLOBAL SPIRIT TOUR" AND A NEW ALBUM. THE TOUR STARTS ON MAY 5TH IN STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN, AND THE NEW ALBUM IS EXPECTED TO COME OUT IN EARLY 2017

ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL BANDS OF ALL TIME, DEPECHE MODE, HAS RECENTLY, AT A SPECIAL PRESS CONFERENCE IN MILAN, ANNOUNCED THAT 2017 WILL SEE A NEW ALBUM AND A BIG WORLD TOUR. THE GLOBAL SPIRIT TOUR BY DAVE GAHAN, MARTIN GORE AND ANDY FLETCHER WILL PROVIDE TICKETS FOR 1,5 MILLION FANS IN 32 CITIES IN 21 COUNTRIES IN EUROPE. THE TOUR STARTS ON MAY 5TH IN SWEDEN AND ENDS ON JULY 23RD IN ROMANIA. AFTER EUROPE, THE TOUR MOVES TO THE US AND SOUTH AMERICA.



AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE IN MILAN, THE BAND PLAYED A MINUTE LONG TEASER FOR THE ALBUM

Their last tour, the Delta Machine Tour, was one of the most successful tours by any band. The tour was attended by 2,5 million fans. Depeche Mode continue their charity work. In cooperation with the Swiss watch brand Hublot, they will continue to collect money for a fund, with the goal to make drinking water accessible to everyone in the world.

“Spirit” will be the 14th studio album by Depeche Mode and it was produced by James Ford (who worked with bands like Florence and the Machine and Arctic Monkeys). “We’re very proud of the energy and sound on Spirit. We’re excited to go on tour and share that with our fans worldwide”, says Gahan.

Depeche Mode have sold over a 100 million albums so far and they played in front of more than 30 million people. What can we expect from the album still in production in the studio in Santa Barbara? At the press conference in Milan, the band played a minute long teaser for the album and it seems that they’re going back to the electro sound, as well as incorporating the atmosphere from their previous album Delta Machine and dark elements from the album Ultra from 1997.

Delta Machine was a blues album and like a real machine it was well oiled and reminded us of early works of Depeche Mode. Their biggest hits like Personal Jesus are style-wise American idioms, pulled through the vision of electro music of the 80s and 90s.

After many years of cooperation with Mute Records, this will be their first album for Columbia Records and the first time after “Songs of Faith and Devotion” which includes collaborations with their old friend Flood. Dave, Martin and Andrew introduced themselves as hard boys who constantly refuse to part with inspiration. The sensibility is well known, in form there is no surprise, but what fascinates is the vitality, freshness, the focus and the balance between contemplative and dance numbers.

After the Delta Machine Tour, the band took a break. But not all members rested – Dave Gahan worked on



the “Soulsavers” project. He and his musical partner Rich Machin produced the well received album “Angels & Ghosts” and they embarked on a short, sold-out tour. For Rolling Stone, Gahan said, the song “Shine”, which stood out from the album, was a representation of his optimistic side. He also said he got the idea for the song during a concert.

Martin Gore was working on his new studio album “MG”. The album consists of 16 songs, all of them electronic instrumentals. He started working on it at the end of the Delta Machine Tour in March 2014 and recorded it in his home studio in Santa Barbara.



One thing is sure – Depeche Mode are the most popular synth-band of all time, which with a mixture of pop elements, touching melodic lines and synth-parts changed the flow of modern music forever. They're the fathers of electro music and 30 years of their work and innovative and break-through-music inspired a whole generation of musicians.

Their music left its mark on many musicians for their new approach in composing, recording and using samples. There is no doubt that they will prove their progressive vibrations, endless energy and creativity with their new album which we can't wait to hear in spring 2017.

TUNEUP!

MILKY CHANCE PRESENT THEIR NEW SINGLE "COCOON"

The German duo Milky Chance (Clemens Rehbein and Philipp Dausch), who in 2013 conquered the world with "Stolen Dance", in which they, according to the NY Times connected reggae and electronic music better than anyone before, now present their new single "Cocoon". After their successful debut album "Sadnecessary" from 2014, now comes their new album "Blossom", about which they say that it conveys the experience they made in the last two years, as well two worlds they jumped into: the tours and the private life at home as an attempt to balance it out. "Cocoon" tells a story about returning to the state of peace or as Clemens puts it, finding a place where you can be what you are. The new album shows that, though they've grown, they still remained faithful to themselves and the old sound.

EMELI SANDÉ RELEASES NEW STUDIO ALBUM "LONG LIVE THE ANGELS"

Emeli Sandé released a new album called "Long Live The Angels", which she previously announced with the single "Hurts". The album was recorded in New York, Los Angeles, London and Oxford. It contains 15 songs in the standard and 18 songs in the deluxe edition. Producers on the album were Jay Electronica, Naughty Boy, Mac & Phil and others. The whole album is inspired by a feeling of freedom and self-cognition, as well as her Zambian roots.

BON JOVI HAVE A NEW ALBUM – "THIS HOUSE IS NOT FOR SALE"

The new studio album by Bon Jovi brings us 12 songs in the standard and 5 more songs in the deluxe edition. They already released four singles from it – "Labor Of Love", "Born Again Tomorrow", the title song "This House Is Not For Sale" and "Knockout". This is the 13th studio album by the American rockers and it comes after last years "Burning Bridges", which they released as a thank-you to their fans. The album was produced by Jon Bon Jovi together with John Shanks. This album brings a few changes in the sound, but it's also the first one without the guitars of Richi Sambora.

STEVIE WONDER AND ARIANNA GRANDE JOIN FORCES ON "FAITH"

The duet "Faith" is part of the soundtrack for the animated movie "Sing" by Garth Jennings. Among others, you can hear the voices of Matthew McConaughey, Reese Witherspoon and Seth MacFarlane in the movie. The talented Arianna Grande tweeted about the collaboration with the legendary musician. This year she released her album "Dangerous Woman" with hits such as "Dangerous Woman", "Into You" and the Nicki Minaj collaboration "Side To Side".

by: Marin M.
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DEADLI

TV-SHOWS YOU MISSED IN 20



16, BUT YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE

There are shows that are written about too much, and then there are shows no one writes about enough. There are many factors that cause such a situation – which production company is behind a project, which names are involved, what the situation is with the competition in the same genres, what the trend is with the popularity of the given TV category and so on.

We've all heard of Game of Thrones, even if we're not fans of epic fantasy, and even a smaller number amongst us has actually read the corresponding books by George R. R. Martin. We've also all heard of The Walking Dead, though it's hard to believe that the whole planet is fascinated by dirty zombies. Daredevil is now a superhero every housewife knows about, though most of them never read a comic book starring said hero. These three shows are only good examples: the list is much longer and by now you get the point – good marketing does wonders, even for TV-shows.

Though they don't need to have worse marketing, some very good shows somehow remain under the radar. Those are shows you'll hear about after one or two seasons, from someone who likes to experiment and considers themselves a TV prophet, who will, with a "yes, I'm guilty" smile, in a lower voice, recommend you a show they discovered recently, talking about it only in superlatives. If you listen to them (and such people can be very persuasive and sometimes even unexpectedly stubborn), you're going to binge something that you might or might not like, because secondary TV programs are not for everyone. But always remember, that even the first Netflix originals, which are now very much in, started as secondary programs. Those were the shows we talked about after we discussed all the scandals from the latest Grey's Anatomy episode with our friends. Today things look a bit different, right?

PopCulture Magazine presents a list of seven shows that were looked over this year, without justification. We at our Magazine had fun with them, even though there weren't billboards around the world pitching them to everyone. If you sinned and missed some of these shows, you still have time to make amends.



GOLIATH

Amazon Prime Video is becoming the new Netflix. Or it has already become it, depending who you're talking to. Maybe Goliath is the best example of production quality at Amazon: a show full of characters on the edge of morality, easily to fall in love with or hate. This is a legal-drama that deals with murky interactions on many levels – from business to private relationships. The only setback is the last, eighth episode, which lacks the expected climax, so that it remains flat and somehow melancholic. But we forgive the production this details and hope it will soon be renewed for a second season.

MARCELLA

Netflix plays ever better on UK terrain. Marcella is a story about a detective with a serious psychological problem that threatens her private life and career and comes from the creators of the show The Bridge, Hans Rosenfeldt and brings to ITV and Netflix the very characteristic breath of Scandinavian thrillers. Anna Friel triumphs as the lead, though the rest of the cast is not worse at all. Season 2, which was never in question, will hit ITV in 2017, and after that it will be available for binging on Netflix.



THE NIGHT MANAGER

It's not bad at all if you missed the premiere of this show, because it's perfect for binging. Mysterious and exciting, every episode "pulls" you to immediately watch the next, just like the novel by John Le Carre, which was adapted into the show, is a page-turner. BBC brings us six episodes of this now praised and awarded TV project, which relies first and foremost on the talent of its cast – Tom Hiddleston, Hugh Laurie, Olivia Coleman and others. In only two episodes, we visit Cairo and Zermatt, Switzerland and Devon in England, but also Mallorca in Spain. This jet-set-spy-story will fit perfectly the taste of 007-fans.





GREENLEAF

If you remember that Oprah spend quarter of a century listening to stories about dysfunctional families, it is no wonder that her production company brings us such a functional story about a mighty, but at the end of the day dysfunctional family. OWN (Oprah Winfrey Network, for the case that you've been living under a rock) launched a few very successful TV-shows, amongst which is Greenleaf. The story starts when, after two decades of absence, the daughter of the Greenleaf family returns to Memphis and accepts a position in the family mega-church. The family, which on first glance is full of harmony, happiness and which is respectable, hides more than one secret, and someone with a harsh tongue would say how saints were always the biggest sinners.

THE CATCH

Shonda Rhimes could have her own TV-network and it would surely be amongst the most watched, but she doesn't need that, because ABC is right now full on in "Shondaland" and most productions come from her – Grey's Anatomy, Scandal, How To Get Away With Murder. In such an atmosphere, it's no wonder if you miss a show. Especially if it's packet differently than you might expect. The Catch is exactly that – a different and more kitschy Shonda, and that's exactly the reason it deserves a chance, though the reviews were mixed when it first aired. While the team works on season 2, revisit season 1 and enjoy the chemistry of the main actors and the perfect hairdos of Mireille Enos.





QUEEN OF THE SOUTH

It was just a question of time when the “Narcos-wave” will start living outside Netflix. The USA Network found a perfect solution for everyone who wants the taste of narco-cartels, but with a story in a modern environment and with more fiction. Queen of The South is an exemplary remake of the telenovela La Reine del Sur, packed in a way to correspond to the needs of the American TV-audience. The first season starts exquisitely, continues a bit slowly and ends in fire, mostly fulfilling the expectations of the lovers of the genre. Alice Braga as Teresa Mendoza is great, but Veronica Falcón as Camila Vargas, the cruel and shrewd patron, totally steals her thunder. It has been renewed for a second season, albeit with a new showrunner.

3%

If shows like Quantico and Homeland keep you on the edge of your seat and if you like dystopian stories like The Hunger Games or Divergent, then this Brazilian show from the Netflix Original family brings you a perfect genre mix and is a perfect example of a show the media looked over despite its quality. When you say “sci-fi” these days, the whole planet gets glossy eyes and thinks of Westworld and there surely are reasons for that, but this Brazilian show really deserves your attention. Though it’s similar to the shows we mentioned in the first sentence, it’s more than a mere copy and it deals, partly through satire, with some very current questions: TV-contests, immigration, economic and every other inequality.



all eyes on her!

PRIYANKA CHOPRA

18.07.1982 • INDIAN ACTRESS

ON UPBRINGING

My parents brought me up as a person who thinks with her own head. Our evening conversations always revolved around the question “What is really important in this moment?”, be it for us as a family or in a broader sense.

ON REPRESENTING A CULTURE

The USA and Europe are just now getting to know me and that’s an incredible experience for me, but I get even more excited and happy when I hear that someone, wanting to see me in some of my previous roles, watched an Indian movie on Netflix for the first time, and that’s something I really hear often these days.

ON GETTING ROLES

Everyone has their own story: you, me, the readers. Someone only needs to recognize the story and to write a good script based on it, and then the role has to go to the best possible person for the job, and not to a black girl, white girl or Indian girl. The girl next door is not a blonde with blue eyes anymore, but she isn’t necessarily dark skinned either. Today you can’t play by numbers and TV has to be a mirror of the modern world.

ON WATCHING THE BAY

In the comedy Baywatch, which is made on the legacy of the cult show from the nineties, I play a kind of a tough girl who is a bit of a control freak, but in a really fantastic and funny way. I can’t wait for the premiere next summer!

ON QUANTICO

That show touches on so many problems of our world – differences, equality, feminism, terrorism... we deal with serious topics in an exciting and fun way.

INHUMANS



Marvel announces three new INHUMANS titles for 2017!

Marvel has recently announced not one, but three new Inhumans titles for 2017! ROYALS #1, BLACK BOLT #1 and SECRET WARRIORS #1 are coming in 2017. "For anybody who is even slightly curious about the Inhumans, or for anybody who might be looking to check back in with them, these launches are for you," said editor Wil Moss. "Exciting new directions, crazy talented creative teams, and a different vibe for each of these three books. ROYALS is epic and intimate all at once, opening up all-new corners of the Marvel Universe on a monthly basis. SECRET WARRIORS is gonna be a real crowd-pleaser, a true roller coaster of a story with a cast of all your favorites (plus a few surprise team-members). BLACK BOLT is the line's secret weapon, an

intense exploration of the unknowable King of the Inhumans, with visuals like you've never seen – believe me." After a long absence of the INHUMANS from the comic book stands, this is great news for any Marvel fan!



INHUMANS coming to IMAX and TV!

If you were among those sad to see that Marvel Studios scrapped the INHUMANS movie which even had its own release date – don't fret! The INHUMANS are coming to TV, but before that, you can see them in IMAX! The news broke recently that Marvel will bring about their INHUMANS franchise with a TV series consisting of eight episodes, the first two of which will premiere in IMAX-ready movie theaters since they were filmed in the large-screen format. ABC will then take those two episodes and repackage them with additional bonus content for a TV broadcast. Additional action sequences in the series will also be shot with the IMAX cameras as part of a deal between the two companies. It was also revealed that the first two episodes of The INHUMANS will feature about 80 minutes of content, and confirmed that they will debut exclusively in IMAX theaters across all territories on or around September 1st. The episodes will enjoy a two-week theatrical run before ABC premieres the first episode on September 26th. So yeah, almost a year to go, but we're very excited!

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IMAGES IN COVER STORY: Courtesy of Lionsgate



THEY WEREN

XXI CENTURY RITA REPULSA &



W' T KIDDING:

POWER RANGERS ARE HERE!



I WON'T EVEN GET
INTO THE FACT
THAT MY ENTIRE
WARDROBE
WAS SOON
COMPLETELY
GREEN. THEN
WHITE. THEN RED

No child of the late 80s and early 90s could've imagined their daily routine without the usual TV fix, which could span from an hourly access, between mom's cooking show and boring evening news father never misses, up to the bliss of having your own set where you can enjoy the insane colourful world you live in with all your plush toys and action figures. After all, cable TV was on the rise, and discovering the latest flame of the media was all the rage. From the early cartoon shows promoting nothing but every single Barbie toy cousin made by the magnate known as Mattel, all the way to serious franchises that woke collector's fury in all of us (George Lucas, I'm looking at you). If I had never decided to give away my old toys, I probably wouldn't have enough space in my three room apartment nowadays. That's how often new shows and accompanying toys inspired me to yank my father's sleeve and bargain for the new set of good grades.



I must have had at least four He-Men with every bit of accessory by the age of ten. Just giving an insight into how good of a student I was before it all went downhill. But that's another story altogether.

At the rather fragile age of 12, I was first exposed to the craze of flashy, colourful spandex and overly exaggerated gymnastics routines for the salvation of planet Earth, simply titled "Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers" by Saban Entertainment. In the first episode I saw, five teenagers were hopping around a humongous raisin with a pig face donning a freakishly large roman helmet. Yes, I was just as baffled. An unlucky friend who presented this unnervingly tacky show kept promising "it gets better" through the course of 20 minutes.

It didn't.

But that, somehow, had all the appeal I needed to start secretly checking out the adventures of the Angel Grove teen residents. A guilty pleasure turning into a slight obsession. I won't even get into the fact that my entire wardrobe was soon completely green. Then white. Then red, before I gave up on cloning the ever-changing monochromatic outfit choices of one of the characters, Tommy (Jason David Frank).

Somewhere in between, I was completely unlike every other kid going into mild temper tantrums every time I miss the episode everyone was talking about. Just pre-Netflix life, right? But I was hooked, and this tacky and cheap TV series pretty much marked my childhood, again, not unlike everyone else's.

BLOODLESS VIOLENCE, CREATIVE EVOLUTION & POSITIVE MESSAGES


An intergalactic entity known as Zordon gathers a team of extraordinary teenagers with the ability to inherit a set of powers, or a second nature, more accurately, in order to stop a tyrant known as Rita Repulsa from conquering the Earth. The young Angel Grove residents reluctantly agree to be the planet's last stand against annihilation, but fully grow into their new roles with extreme ease, and pose not only as the defenders of our world, but also as great amount of fun for all ages for years to come.

"Power Rangers" spanned several generations of not only fighting teenagers, but a small superhero universe, as well as a myriad of unique villains, each more captivating and silly than the last, and neatly connected it all with staples of early 90s kids shows – wonky acting, repetitive scenarios and cardboard buildings. We're not even discussing randomly exploding patches of grass, because only Power Rangers could erase half a city block worth of ground just by posing victoriously after every single monster sent to wreck havoc failed.

The recipe proved to be a huge success, because Saban presented a whole series of redeeming qualities to counter the limitations of the budget, thus inevitably bringing a classic piece of TV pop art history to three generations of viewers. The show had all a young, growing mind could ask for: bloodless violence, creative evolution of each character and a whole set of positive messages about friendship, family and love.

In a decade of Hollywood's creative downtime that mainly resorts to forced overuse of green screen effects and rehashed fandoms, it was only a matter of time we would hear the whispers of a complete new take on the superhero team that we could brush off, like each "Masters of the Universe" rumor. However, "Lionsgate" and a renewed "Saban Entertainment" decided to go full out and here we are – riding the anticipation wave of a spanking new, rather twisted remake of the classic that marked our childhood and early teens. The "Power Rangers" are back, and with no less than a promise to blow us away.

And boy, they weren't kidding.

A group of young people, including a woman in a green beanie and a man in a blue jacket, are looking up in awe at a bright light source in a dark, smoky environment. The scene is dimly lit, with the primary light coming from the source they are looking at, creating a dramatic and hopeful atmosphere.

IT WAS ONLY A
MATTER OF TIME
WE WOULD HEAR
THE WHISPERS
OF A COMPLETE
NEW TAKE ON THE
SUPERHERO TEAM



EXPLOSION

First production images gave us an insight into a sleek design that raised quite a number of eyebrows. Rather than relying on insane amounts of polyester, the designer team presented a mouth-watering (mouth-foaming for “true fans”) bulk of breast plates, chrome details and Gigerian nightmare fuel that reeked of awesome, leaving no fan in their seat.

The tackiness is all-gone, it seems, and that can actually serve a purpose of giving a good angle for the revamped youngsters. Filling the shoes of the original five of an established classic is a demanding job that could easily lead into a downfall of the newest family member of a franchise, but the drastic approach ensures Zach, Trini, Billy, Kimberley and Jason will be presented in a whole new light, thus giving more freedom for a new generation to present the characters we know and love in a way we never saw them before.

The first video teaser eventually found its way to all major networks, and the reception was, fairly put, mixed. Who would have thought the fandom of a colorful kids show could be so divided twenty-something years later. On one side, fans embracing change and soaking in every







THE RISK PAID OFF, AS THE INTERNET CAUGHT FIRE THAT'S BOUND TO KEEP EV- ERYONE ON THE EDGE OF THEIR SEATS UNTIL MARCH 24TH

second of the hype, on the other – torches and pitchforks in a form of angry comment sections and forum posts. But one thing was certain – no head was left unturned, and there is a good chance director Dean Israelite won't be crying on his way to the bank, after the full feature rolls out.

The risk paid off, as the internet caught fire that's bound to keep everyone on the edge of their seats until March 24th, the official release date for the United States. After the initial swipe at a traditional approach, the production gave the audience no rest, in a form of a glimpse of Rita Repulsa of the new generation, and what seemed like a constant flame turned into an explosion. Rita is no more a pota-to-sack doning, charming screamer,

but rather a stern-faced wet dream everyone who grew up with “Star Trek” had at least once. Chrome green armor we see only in the wildest of RPG game designs came around, paving the way for all the shenanigans the production might throw at the hardcore fanbase, and people went from reluctant to excited within seconds! Rita Repulsa is no more a quirky early Tina Turner, but a warrior royalty serving Tyra Banks deadly vixen.

But probably the biggest set of hit and miss bafflement when it comes to design arrived recently in a form of a megazord action figure unboxing video on YouTube, that profusely featured the back side of the box itself, revealing all of the new zord designs. Since it's fairly obvious we're talking about



a reboot here, the original lore toyed with every boy's obsession with robots and dinosaurs. However, the new set of gigantic vehicles that combine into a megazord range from slightly resembling the beasts they portray, all the way to pearl clutching "What in the name of Lovecraft is this?" The triceratops features an upgrade, as it finally got legs – all six of them (wait, what?), staying somewhat true to the aforementioned Giger style. The pterodactyl is again an obvious aircraft, threatening the masculinity stereotype by being badass and pink at the same time, but (and it's a damn big but), the mastodon rolled in with a glorious "wah-wah-waaah" delivering a rude testimony that even top designers can flunk. If the Zord's name wasn't written in all capitals, one would be able to miss it completely. That's how abstract the new presentation seems. We can only hope the mastodon had a bad day when taking that promotional shot.





MORE SINISTER?

The Lionsgate marketing department did hell of a job raising the bar when it comes to shock value, and the most notable example of innovation was again presented in the Power Rangers' arch-nemesis, Rita. It has yet to be confirmed, but our favourite villain might as well snatch a colour of her own and represent the mighty morphin' side dish of green. Leaked on-set shots do show the green ranger, and here's crossing fingers they don't turn out to be fake. Does it change the original lore? For the better, in my humble opinion. Is Rita actually so hellbent on destroying the rangers because she used to be just like them before she went mad with power? Was she the sole guardian until that pesky Zordon, and his trashcan Alpha 5 decided to sprinkle the magic dust around and hire a whole bunch of rainbow clad warriors, thus rendering her unnecessary? Or is it more sinister, like, she grew green with envy with her team of rangers, and she destroyed them all? Is this the alternate universe where she did grab green power all to herself from Tommy or Tommy never existed in the first place?

Time will tell. But so little time is left and the producers are surely ticking our hunger off with absolutely no remorse. And we lap it up, every bit, every second. And why wouldn't we? It's our childhood dreams growing up with us, and turning super serious. Or should I say "morphin' super serious"?

I'll let myself out.



and MORE...



The original “Power Rangers” series was a megahit of unexpected proportions. The show that catered to everyone’s creative young mind was first bought off the Japanese original “Super Sentai Power Rangers”, that actually started in the mid 70s, featuring some amazingly kitschy visuals. At one point, one of the female rangers even sported the big ole’ pageant girl hair – on top of a helmet. Let me repeat that for you. On – top – of – her – helmet. Insectioid costumes and unnecessary motorbike rides, the show was nothing short of ridiculous, but I digress – it was the 70s and everyone were probably on acid. It could be the only explanation. Saban entertainment’s first set of teen superheroes with prehistoric power beasts was actually Japan’s 8th generation, actually planned as a one-off show without big expectations. Hell, even the white ranger’s design was taken directly from a completely other season from Japan. A lot of fight footage was redubbed and reused, thus

not even giving a chance to the American team of youngsters to show off their skills. Not until the outburst to fame. The show grew notoriously large, and is known as a staple classic of 90s cable television.

No successful franchise is without its own set of troubles, that one’s for sure. If we got to see the original season 1 in today’s climate, the whole franchise would be rendered dead on arrival. Whoever thought it would be logical to cast a black guy as the black ranger, and an Asian girl as the yellow ranger would face a wee bit problem – ever finding a job again. Lucky for them, early 90s didn’t have the internet on every smart device, giving voice to those who were rightfully offended by the distasteful production choice.

On top of the race/colour scandal, rumors of an unappealing dispute between the cast of the hit series started popping out left and right. As some leaked



on-set footage later confirmed, Jason David Frank, the face of green ranger proved to be a homophobic piece of work back in the 90s. The tension between a then closeted David Yost and the new arrival escalated to the point of the blue ranger's departure from the show. Even while being a fan favourite, I seriously doubt JDF's career would survive a scandal like that today. Truth be told, except for the fighting ring, I don't recall seeing much of him in recent decades.

Around the same time Trini (Thuy Trang), departed from the show, and went her own way. After a noteworthy support role in the

infamous "The Crow", she fell victim to a bitter faith. One of the beloved teen icons met her end in a car accident back in 2003.

The first movie about the rainbow-clad warriors was shot in 1995. The movie featured the original cast of the season 1 and 2, but our quirky villainess Rita and her husband, Lord Zedd (still the most impressive design choice of the entire era) were reduced to a humorous cameos. Why the authors decided to go down the route of the rather unlikable, pun throwing Ivan Ooze remained a mystery. The bold update of designs for a full cinema feature unfortunately didn't age gracefully.

POWER RANGERS

Who's to say remakes aren't a great way to attract new audiences to a show we hold close to our hearts? We saw it happen with "Avengers", and "Transformers" to some extent, not so much with "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles". Sure, no Kimberley Hart can ever match Amy Jo Johnson, but what the hell do we old geezers know better than the kids the producers are aiming this reboot at? After all, no parents were capable of explaining to us the show we're watching religiously was utter trash – but the funkiest badass trash we grew up with.

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NEW MAGIC IN THE MCU!

Not many people believed in 2008, when the first Iron-Man movie came out, that Marvel Studios' idea of a cinematic universe, interconnected movies, would be able to hold the attention of worldwide audiences longer than one or two movies, let alone that they'd make it exactly as they planned, but here we are – the 14th movie is out! Yes, we're talking Doctor Strange. At the same time, in a way, this is actually a first movie, because it's the first one to introduce us to the idea of a multiverse – a vast number of parallel universes and variants of our own world and ourselves, and it's also the first one to introduce magic in the MCU as such. If you remember, even Thor was explained not as a real god, but as being part of an alien race which would have been perceived as gods by primitive cultures on Earth. But with Doctor Strange, the magic is real.

IMAGE: Courtesy of Image.net



MARVEL

DOCTOR STRANGE

THIS IS THE MOST IMPRESSIVE, BEST AND WACKIEST MOVIE BY MARVEL STUDIOS TO DATE




This movie also gives us something we aren't used to anymore and which we actually don't even like anymore – an origin story. Thus, this is after a long time a Marvel movie you can actually enjoy and understand without having watched the 13 previous ones.

Doctor Stephen Strange (Benedict Cumberbatch) is a neurosurgeon-genius, but socially very unintelligent and rude to people around him, whose hands get so badly damaged in a car crash that he can't work anymore. After using all the possibilities of western medicine without a satisfactory result, he turns to eastern mysticism and goes to see The Ancient One (Tilda Swinton), with hopes that she might cure his hands. Instead, he finds new talents and a new reason to live. Of course, there are one or two bad guys, some fights and a showdown, but we don't want to spoil anything for you, really.

But what we want to tell you is this: while when the casting of Tilda Swinton was announced there was a huge sh*tstorm on the internet because of "whitewashing" The Ancient One, she took over the movie and I can't imagine anyone delivering it better than she did. Every line she has in the movie is so true that we believe every word she says. Benedict Cumberbatch with an American accent is also good, but he doesn't get much space to show his charm, because

he doesn't play a really pleasant character, but we expect it to get better in movies to come. And all the rest of the cast - Mads Mikkelsen, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Rachel McAdams, Benedict Wong (who plays Wong) – all of them are perfect in their respective roles. But we're already used to that by Marvel. What I find a little bit irritating is the humor that has been added additionally. I actually miss the time when we only knew a movie is being made, and then the movie came out, we see it and that's it. Today we have information from all the stages of production, including pick-ups, re-shoots, re-works on the script to make it more "light" and funnier... You can actually see which of the jokes had been added later on. But that doesn't harm the impression the movie makes. And that impression is: at least visually, concerning the colors used and the effects (which in the trailer maybe remind you of Inception, but believe me, this is so much more and such a different story) this is the most impressive, best and wackiest movie by Marvel Studios to date. Though some fans of this part of the Marvel Universe expected it to be even more trippy, don't forget this is Disney and that Disney always plays it safe, so that the "craziness" has been toned down to an amount which wouldn't drive the audiences away, which is used to more "grounded" stories so far. We can hope that step by step, we will sink into more of the crazy magic.

At the end of the day, Doctor Strange is a great introduction for a whole new chapter of the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

A full-page photograph of Wanda Maximoff (Scarlet Witch) from the Marvel Cinematic Universe. She is shown from the waist up, wearing her iconic red and gold costume with a large red cape. Her face is marked with blood, and she has a serious, intense expression. The background is dark and out of focus, showing some architectural details. A semi-transparent red rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing white text.

ENEDICT
CUMBERBATCH
WITH AN AMERICAN
ACCENT IS ALSO
GOOD, BUT HE
DOESN'T GET MUCH
SPACE TO SHOW HIS
CHARM

#BIGones

by: Jelena J.
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GHOST

IMAGE: Courtesy of Image.net



HERE WE HAD A
MOVIE DEALING
SUCH AS THE ROLE
OF TECHNOLOGY
IN THE SOCIETY,
RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN ROBOTIC
AND HUMAN
AND THE SOUL
(GHOST) AND THE
BODY (SHELL)
WITH DEEPLY
PHILOSOPHICAL
ISSUES



S H E L L



Major Motoko Kusanagi dove from a skyscraper in her skintight tactical suit 20 years ago, and instantly became an inescapable part of any discussion on cyberpunk and cyber-bodies. Nowadays, anime are quite ubiquitous in fan culture, due (among other things) to accessibility of streaming services and abundance of online information, but the situation was a bit different in the 1990s. Anime were mostly distributed in the form of VHS tapes (google it, kids), and the selection was quite limited. So everybody who watched anime at the time saw *Ghost in the Shell*, and it blew away all their ideas on themes that an animated movie could explore. Here we had a movie dealing with deeply philosophical issues (the director Mamoru Oshii later recalled that the producers were always pushing for more action and less philosophy) such as the role of technology in the society, relationship between robotic and human and the soul (ghost) and the body (shell).

Even though it was an inherent product of typically Japanese understanding of cyberpunk and its esthetics, the film nevertheless clicked with western audiences and almost instantaneously received a cult status. It is also probably one of the anime films most frequently featured in academic papers, and was analyzed by everybody from feminist theorists to robotics scientists. Its ongoing popularity probably has to do with the fact that although it tackled quite complex topics, indeed maybe the most complex one of all – what it means to be a human being and what factor makes us human, it did so in an accessible manner, with just a right amount of action and suspense. The film was later followed by two more movies, several television series and video games, and Major Kusanagi remains one of the most popular anime characters of all times.

If we have in mind the sheer number of *GITS* fans, it is no wonder that the announcement



THE FILM WAS LATER FOLLOWED BY TWO MORE MOVIES, SEVERAL TELEVISION SERIES AND VIDEO GAMES, AND MAJOR KUSANAGI REMAINS ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR ANIME CHARACTERS OF ALL TIMES.



about a live-action film was received with equal amounts of excitement and trepidation. The US film industry has been attempting to deliver a remake of famous anime franchises for decades, and while the majority of titles still languish in development hell (such as *Akira* and *Cowboy Bebop*), those that did see the light of day were mostly panned by both viewers and critics (just remember *Dragonball*, or even better – never think about that mess again). The first signal that things might be going in the wrong direction was the casting of Scarlett Johansson in the leading role. Many hurried to point out that it was ridiculous to have a Caucasian actress playing a Japanese character in a Japanese setting, and the studio did not help matters with its tone-deaf statements, especially when the information that white actors will be made “more Asian” in post-production was leaked out to the public. The fans quickly took sides, with one side presenting long lists of competent Japanese actresses and railing against racism in Hol-

lywood, while the other laughed at “social justice warriors” and repeated the old adage of “choosing the best person for the role regardless of race”. All the brouhaha, of course, only helped the film’s marketing.

When the full trailer dropped just a couple of days ago, it was first received with uniform enthusiasm. It looked exactly like the anime! It even had the same scenes, frame by frame! Scarlett looked great! Naturally, once the first wave of exhilaration passed, people were quick to notice potential flaws. It does seem that the main reason for casting Johansson was her appeal to male audience and the fact that she looks great in a tactical suit that makes her look naked. Also, if the live-action copies even the frames of the animated original, then why was it even made? And even though nobody can say that the trailer does not look great and very artistically and technically polished, will there be the same ghost in that shiny shell? I guess it remains to be seen.

#BIGones

16 THING

YOU HAVE TO KNOW BEFORE

ROGUE ONE

A **STAR WARS** STORY

IMAGE: Courtesy of Image.net



16 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE SEEING ROGUE ONE

Rogue One: A Star Wars story, the highly anticipated Star Wars Anthology movie is almost upon us. The first Star Wars movie without the Skywalker family (or at least we think so, though Darth Vader appears in it, and he is a Skywalker after all), apart from the „main saga“ (the „Episode“ movies), the Star Wars movie we always wanted to see. How did the Rebels get the plans for the Death Star (the plans Leia carries in Episode IV), what happened? That and more, we'll learn soon. But what is it you need to know before watching the movie? Here's a list of 16 things you have to know before seeing Rogue One - and if you ask yourselves why exactly 16 things - it's to honor December 16th, the day of the wide release of the movie worldwide.

Who's who?

1

The *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* cast includes Felicity Jones, Mads Mikkelsen, Ben Mendelsohn, Alan Tudyk, Diego Luna, Forest Whitaker, Donnie Yen, Riz Ahmed and Wen Jiang. The movie is directed by Gareth Edwards. The script is by Chris Weitz, with the story coming from Gary Whitta and John Knoll based on characters and ideas created by George Lucas. It is produced by Kathleen Kennedy, Allison Shearmur, and Simon Emanuel, executive produced by John Knoll and Jason McGatlin, and co-produced by John Swartz and Kiri Hart.

When does it take place?

2

The events of *Rogue One* take place in between the first two *Star Wars* trilogies, that is to say, after the events of *Episode III: Revenge of the Sith* and before *Episode IV: A New Hope*. It's a time when the Jedi were believed to be extinct, so the rebels are on their own battling the Empire in what is essentially a straight-up war film.

We have a new leading lady

3

In the vein of *The Force Awakens'* Rey (Daisy Ridley), the new *Star Wars* installment features another badass female protagonist: resistance fighter Jyn Erso, played by *The Theory of Everything's* Felicity Jones.

No John Williams

4

Rogue One will be the first ever *Star Wars* film to not feature a John Williams score, but don't worry. The music for the film is in good hands with Academy Award-winning composer Alexandre Desplat, who has created the aural backdrops for blockbusters like *Zero Dark Thirty*, *The Queen*, and *Argo*, as well as several Wes Anderson movies (he won his Oscar for *The Grand Budapest Hotel*) and the final two *Harry Potter* films.





No Jedi?

5

One of the points emphasized about the movie is that *Rogue One* would be set in a time when the Jedi are all but extinct. The events of this movie will therefore feature on a far more grounded bunch, none of which are force sensitive.



6

It's not all about X-Wings

Given that one wound up being the primary vehicle of choice for Luke Skywalker in the original trilogy, X-Wings most definitely rank as some of the most popular ships in the Star Wars universe - but they're not necessarily the ideal equipment in every entanglement that Rogue Squadron finds itself in. So while the group may have been founded by X-Wing pilots, and typically do operate those specific fighters, it's not always those specific fighters that wind up being flown during missions.





New Stormtroopers

Rogue One: A Star Wars Story will bring back the classic white Stormtroopers first introduced in A New Hope. We'll also be getting several new Stormtrooper soldiers. This spinoff will introduce the Scarab Trooper, Pinnacle Trooper, and the Death Squad Trooper for the first time.

7



IMAGE: Courtesy of Image.net

AT-Ats in battle!

Perhaps the biggest geek-out moment in the Rogue One: A Star Wars Story trailer comes when a trio of AT-AT Walkers come lumbering across a palm tree littered beach during what will surely be an epic battle. These aren't the same At-Ats we remember from Empire, though. They have a slightly different coloring and seem to be sleeker and more agile in design. They also appear to be taller. With these things attacking ground troops, we're sure to see at least one Rebel soldier get stomped on!

8



9

Mon Mothma is back!

When she showed up in the trailer, this iconic character completely took the fans' breath away. Simply because she doesn't look to have aged a day since we first saw her in *Star Wars: Episode VI - Return of the Jedi* over thirty years ago. First introduced in *Return of the Jedi*, Mothma served in the Galactic Senate and Imperial Senate as the representative of Chandrila, the leader of the Alliance to Restore the Republic, and the first chancellor of the New Republic. At the end of the Clone War, as Palpatine continued to amass power and ultimately transformed the Republic into the Galactic Empire, Mothma worked with Senator Organa to begin planting the seeds of rebellion against the Imperial regime.



10

Epic beach battle

Star Wars: Episode VIII is going to have scenes that take place on a beach, and out in the surf. But judging from the trailer *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* is getting there first. In quite a few shots, we get a glimpse of this new unnamed beach planet. It kind of looks like Florida, and we're sure it's one of the more exotic planets in the *Star Wars* galaxies. Though with all the dead Stormtrooper bodies littering the sand, it doesn't appear to be the best vacation spot.

New shuttles

We say new, but what we really mean is old. This ship appears to be a prototype for the Emperor's shuttle in *Return of the Jedi*, and it reminds us of the shuttle Kylo Ren flies in *The Force Awakens*. Though, it has four upright wings instead of two. It must be noted that all of the weapons

11

and ships in this movie are not as good as the ones we've seen in the original trilogy or the latest sequel *The Force Awakens*. And hopefully their design and function reflects the idea that all of this stuff needs to be replaced in the near future.

Droids!

There are definitely droids in *Rogue One*. The droid that's voiced by Alan Tudyk, K-2SO, will exist in the same spirit that C-3PO did in the original trilogy. He's a passive aggressive, sarcastic droid who has no patience for the inadequacies of man and won't hesitate to voice his opinion. Count on K-2SO to be the comic relief in *Rogue One*.

12

13 *Darth Vader?*

Darth Vader will be in the movie, but he won't have too big of a role, director Edwards said. James Earl Jones is back to voice the villain and while he will be used as more than just fan service, Edwards said they wanted to use him sparingly for that reason. They didn't want to just have Darth Vader in *Rogue One* for the sake of having Darth Vader in *Rogue One*. Instead, Edwards said how they use Vader will make a lot of sense once fans see the film.



Galen Erso was instrumental in building the Death Star

We say new, but what we really mean is old. This ship appears to be a prototype for the Emperor's shuttle in *Return of the Jedi*, and it reminds us of the shuttle Kylo Ren flies in *The Force Awakens*. Though, it has four upright wings instead of two. It must be noted that all of the weapons and ships in this movie are

14

not as good as the ones we've seen in the original trilogy or the latest sequel *The Force Awakens*. And hopefully their design and function reflects the idea that all of this stuff needs to be replaced in the near future.

The call sign

This one isn't earth shattering, but we finally know what "Rogue One" means. In the newest trailer, sassy droid K-2SO states that the Empire is requesting a call sign. In an ode to Han Solo using an older code to obtain clearance from the Imperials to land on Endor in *Return of the Jedi*, Riz Ahmed's Bodhi gives a winking nod to fans as he delivers the line with sustained relish. "It's Rogue ... Rogue One."

15

There's a space monkey

16

His name is Bristan and he's already a fan-favorite.

#RATEthis

by: Marin M.
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IMAGE: Courtesy of The CW

DC's
LEGENDS
OF TOMORROW

A MISSION FOR ALL TIME



BOLDER, BIGGER, BETTER

THIS ARTICLE
COULD ALSO BE
NAMED „HOW
LEGENDS BECAME
MORE FUN THAN
ARROW, THE
SHOW THEY SPUN
OUT OFF“, BUT IT
WASN'T, BECAUSE
THE AUTHOR
RESPECTS
THE WORK OF
STEPHEN AMELL,
THE SUPERHERO
AMONGST
ACTORS.

I remember the first season of DC's Legends of Tomorrow and the feeling that started spoiling it for me somewhere in the midst of the season. The feeling was easily expressed in one simple adjective: cheap. The show wasn't lacking anything (it actually had too much, but more on that later on), but the general impression was luke warm and everything looked like it was forcefully pushed together in one jumbled whole. Too many special effects where you don't need them. A team of superheroes that's too big and no one gets to shine. Over the top acting by some of the cast. Too much love drama where there's no need for it. Too little of a quality plot. The result: I gave up and came back to the show a few months later, when season 1 was already on Netflix, so I could binge it before season 2 starts.

And I didn't regret it, because someone at The CW obviously saw the same things as me, so that the last episodes of season 1 brought changes that make the current season 2 even more worth your time. But let's start at the beginning.

FIND THE INTRUDER

The main problem of season 1 was the team that didn't work. It didn't have that charismatic dysfunctional quality that makes good chemistry and fun. No, here we had a few characters that we wanted to see on the team together with characters we didn't want to see at all. The problem, of course, isn't in the characters themselves (they all have a very interesting and rich



history in the comics that can be used for the show), but in the way The CW introduced them, the relationships of the characters in the show, and to be frank, in the acting (dis)abilities of some of the cast. Then there was a sweep of the cast and Kendra Saunders (Hawkgirl), Carter Hall (Hawkman), Leonard Snart (Captain Cold) and Rip Hunter are now part of the history of the show. The only one I really miss is Leonard Snart, played by the great Wentworth Miller, but that's not really a problem, because Miller made a different deal with the CW and he'll appear from time to time in different DC shows the network makes. So we lost those we should have lost right away. Sorry, nothing personal.

A NEW AND MORE INTERESTING TEAM

In season 2, the place of badly conceived characters and forced relationships (Hawkgirl and The Atom, really?), we've got new and interesting characters: Amaya Jive (Vixen) and Nate Heywood (Steel). Sara Lance (White Canary) is now captain of the ship, which suits her perfectly. She's the character that gained the most from making DC's Legends of Tomorrow into a separate show. While in Arrow (which is in a little creative crisis these days, but let's leave that for another article), she was choking in the fight for the little quality screen time she got, White Canary literally flies here and that's to thank to the very charismatic Caity Lotz who carries the role. Jefferson Jackson and Martin Stein still more or less successfully carry the identity of Firestorm, Ray Palmer learns how big a hero he is when he doesn't have the powerful Atom suit, and Mick Rory (Heat Wave) learns how to play solo in a team he entered as part of a pair (RIP Captain Cold).

IMAGE: Courtesy of The CW





The energy, chemistry and dynamics of the new, freshened team are much better now, and though Sara Lance reminds them now and then of the authority she has now, the game without a real captain (especially one that didn't fit the role) is much more fun.

ANOTHER TEAM?

At the beginning of season 2 the Legends travel through time and meet the Justice Society of America, a team well known to DC fans. The production throws us geeks here a red herring, making us think we're going to follow the adventures of both teams now – which would be wrong, but the idea sounds so good for a moment! This was only a good fore-play to introduce Vixen and Steel into the team, who will shake it up in all the right ways.

LITTLE DRAMA, MUCH FUN

Though season 2 follows a big story arc (which includes now one, but two supervillains from Arrow and The Flash, but you'll get there yourself), what makes her better than season 1 (and better than Arrow at the moment) is the fun. The devil will carry the Legends anywhere – from quarreling with Nazi's 1942, to a conflict with samurai and ninjas in feudal Japan to running away from (take a breath) zombies in the US Civil War. The craziest plot was maybe the visit to the 80s, but we'll let you discover some things for yourselves.

THE BEST IS YET TO COME

All this is an introduction to something, the author of this article expects in the coming days (meaning that while you read PopCulture Magazine #8, the details will be known), and that's the ultimate crossover of Supergirl, The Flash, Arrow and DC's Legends of Tomorrow. While this is the dream of every geek from here to the end of the world, it's also a good way to boost the ratings of all the superhero shows on The CW, which these days struggle on their way to audiences (Emerald Archer, we mean you). But, though with a viewer or two less than in past seasons, the DC Comics TV Universe still does a lot better job than the one on the big screen – someone smart would learn something from that.

by: Michel P.
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must have SPIDER-MAN PLAYLIST

Generations have grown up with comic book stories about Spider-Man. In every story we got new details on how the nerd Peter Parker became Spider-Man and what made him fight the bad guys – Lizard, Green Goblin, Doctor Octopus and others. Spider-Man was and remains one of the most popular superheroes of all time. That's why PopCulture Magazine brings you a must have Spider-Man playlist every Marvel fan has to have!

01. CHAD KROEGER FEATURING JOSEY SCOTT

HERO

The frontman of Nickleback meets the singer of Saliva. This is a classical American rock ballad, made famous as part of the soundtrack of the first Spider-Man movie in 2002. It was a huge commercial success and the video rotated often on MTV.

02. SUM 41

WHAT WE'RE ALL ABOUT

Hard guitar sound, typical for alternative bands from the early 2000s. The song was performed and produced by the band Sum 41. The song can be heard during some action scenes in the first movie from 2002.

03. TRAIN

ORDINARY

The alternative rock band from San Francisco wrote this song for the second Spider-Man movie. As you could have guessed, guitar riffs are a big part of the soundtracks of Spider-Man movies, so the guys from Train just continued a tradition. The song was a hit and peaked at #15 on the US-Charts.

04. MAROON 5

WOMAN

This melodic pop song with a discreet soul note was delivered by Maroon 5. Adam Levine brought his well known charme and big voice to the song, which could be heard in some of the romantic scenes of Spider-Man 2. A real relaxation for your ears.

05. ANA JOHANSSON

WE ARE

Another power-pop song which became a global hit. The Swedish singer recorded it for her debut album „The Way I Am“, but thanks to the huge success in Europe,

IMAGE: Courtesy of Viasat, Marvel Comics

the producers decided to put the song on the soundtrack of Spider-Man 2. The video was shot in Los Angeles and became a huge hit on MTV. Worldwide, the song was one of the best selling singles of the year.

06. JET

HOLD ON

A modern down-tempo rock song with acoustic guitar performed by the great Australian band Jet. It's interesting that they didn't put the song on their "Get Born" album from 2003, but only on the Spidey-soundtrack, which proved as a smart move, because it was a perfect fit for the soundtrack and the dominating sound on it.

07. ALICIA KEYS FT. KENDRICK LAMAR

IT'S ON AGAIN

Alicia Keys and Kendrick Lamar joined forces and recorded a song for The Amazing Spider-Man 2. The song was produced by Pharell Williams and the composer of the movie score – Hans Zimmer. The single had huge success on R&B and Hip-Hop charts, peaking at #7 in the US.

08. REEVE CARNEY

RISE ABOVE 1 FT. BONO, THE EDGE

This song is part of a huge production for a Broadway musical about Spider-Man. The music came from Bono Vox and The Edge of U2 fame. The Edge's characteristic guitar sound dominates the track and Rise Above was clearly suits Bono's voice best. This is a solid example of modern pop.

09. SNOW PATROL

SIGNAL FIRE

The British Alternative rock band Snow Patrol contributed to the Spider-Man 3 soundtrack with the power-pop song „Signal Fire“. Interesting fact: in Britain and Ireland it was released on vinyl with spiderweb-design and entered the top 5 on the charts of both countries. The video got the MTV-award in Japan for the best video-story.

10. YEAH YEAH YEAHS

SEALINGS

The American Indie-Rock band Yeah Yeah Yeahs decided to conquer the mainstream scene by contributing to the soundtrack of Spider-Man 3. The song was a logical continuation of their praised album „Show Your Bones“ from 2006. Their recognizable indie rock, alternative, garage punk sound completed the good soundtrack.



THE MARVEL CORNER BOX RETURNS IN FEBRUARY FOR SPECIAL VARIANT COVERS!

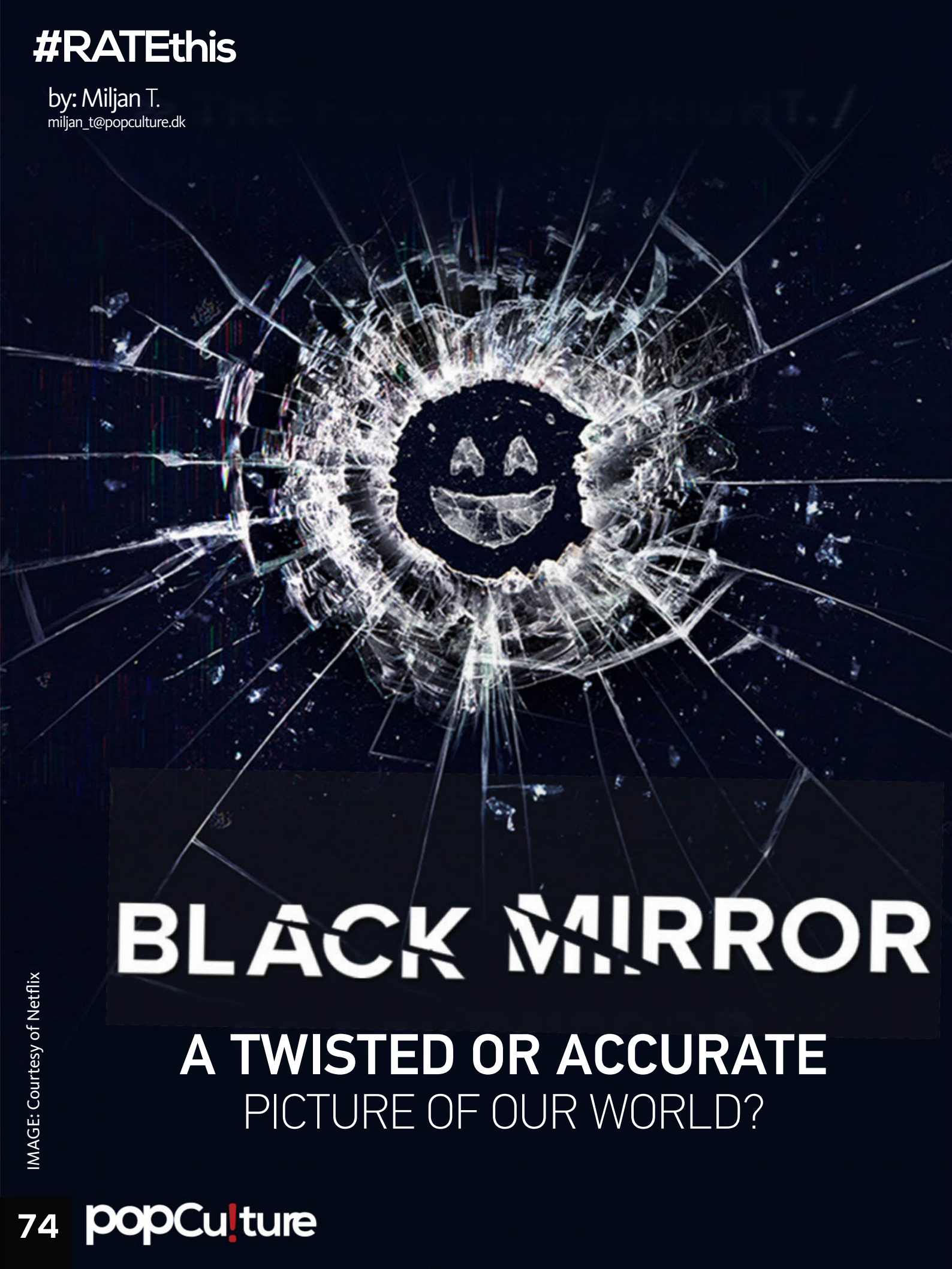
Face front, True Believers and prepare for the return of the iconic Marvel Corner Boxes! On November 22, Marvel announced a series of over 20 Corner Box Variant Covers, coming to select comics throughout the month of February! All rendered by legendary artist Joe Jusko, these covers feature lush paintings inspired by the classic Marvel corner box artwork of yesterday!

“We’re elated to have Joe Jusko do a series of variant covers based on the classic Marvel corner boxes,” says Marvel SVP Sales & Marketing David Gabriel. “Joe perfectly recaptures what made that artwork so iconic in the first place, and he’s bringing that sense of gravitas to some brand new Marvel Corner Boxes featuring modern characters like Spider-Gwen, Deadpool and more.”

Marvel revealed the first eight Corner Box Variants, coming to these February titles - AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #24 among them.

#RATEthis

by: Miljan T.
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BLACK MIRROR

A TWISTED OR ACCURATE
PICTURE OF OUR WORLD?


IMAGE: Courtesy of Netflix

I HEARD OF BLACK MIRROR A YEAR AGO OR SOMETHING — WE WERE TALKING ABOUT THE CHRISTMAS SPECIAL EPISODE, STARRING JOHN HAMM, IN WHICH PEOPLE CAN BLOCK EACH OTHER IN REAL LIFE LIKE ON FACEBOOK. I THOUGHT THE CONCEPT SOUNDED COOL, BUT I WASN'T INTRIGUED TO WATCH A WHOLE SHOW BASED ON THAT.



It wasn't until Netflix released Season 3 that I realized the show wasn't only about blocking people... that was actually only in that already mentioned Christmas Special. This is an anthology show. For those of you who don't know what that means (and have never heard of or watched Twilight Zone), that means that every episode is a self-contained story, like a mini-movie, and most actors (or even all) don't appear again. The episodes aren't interconnected and you can watch them in any order you want.

If you came to watch a happy, shiny, super-polished SF-show, turn around, this is definitely not for you. Also, if you expect the American standard of 20+ episodes per season, turn around. This show, especially the first two seasons and the Christmas Special are as British as the Windsors. Season 1 has 3 episodes, as well as season 2, or 4, if we include the Christmas Special. Season 3, the first one made directly for Netflix, has 6 episodes. So basically, you can binge them all in a day or two – the episodes run for between 45 and 90 minutes each.



IF YOU CAME TO
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IMAGE: Courtesy of Netflix



SO WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

It's not a science-fiction show per se, though technology is at the core of every episode. It is more a show with stories about how humans interact with technology and in that light with each other. The stories are set in a future which is almost our own time, it's almost palpable. The first two seasons are especially dark and gritty and... dirty somehow. The stories and episodes have that Britishness about them, which – I guess – made it popular outside of the UK in the first place. Because you have to hand it to the Brits – they make only a few episodes every season, but boy do they make them.

The man behind the show is Charlie Brooker, a satirist and TV-presenter mainly known in the UK before *Black Mirror*. His satirical pessimism is present in every episode of *Black Mirror*, hence almost no episode has a happy ending (only one, in season 3, can actually be considered a happy ending actually).

What the show does best is mirroring the black side of every and each one of us (yes, it deserves its name) – although the situations the characters find themselves in are still fantastical in a way, we all can surely relate that we would react the same way. If you could bring your lover back from the dead in AI-form, of course you would do it, right? If you had eye implants that record every moment of your life, of course you would track every memory for details you missed or even spy on your husband or wife. If your social life, job, home depended on

your popularity on Instagram, of course you'd do everything to post only the best photos you have and try to be BFFs with the most popular people, right? But life is not a movie and everything you do has consequences, and in that, Charlie Brooker sees no mercy. Every story spirals out to the bitter end and you can't help but feeling sick in the stomach but continue watching nonetheless, fascinated.

And the actors? Oh, my! Bryce Dallas Howard and John Hamm might be the most well known ones, but you can see almost half the cast from *Game of Thrones* in the episodes, and the last episode of season 3 even features Benedict Wong, who plays Wong in *Doctor Strange* (read our review in this issue!). Basically, everybody who's anybody in British TV (and a few Americans) are there. And they're all exceptional.

The only hard time I had with the show is season 3 – since it was made for Netflix, it was Americanized a bit, the color palette was changed, as well as the picture format. There are (different from the first two seasons) characters who are American, but in the end, the show stays true to itself and its already mentioned Britishness. And it always leaves you with the question – what is it that makes us human and does technology take away from that?

If you like to be scared, pushed to think about life and the point of everything, even getting depressed a bit, then this is the perfect show for you. It surely is some of the best pieces of television in the past few decades. I for one can't wait for season 4 to drop.

A black and white portrait of a middle-aged man with short, light-colored hair, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. He is wearing a light-colored button-down shirt. The background is plain and light-colored.

#RATEthis

by: Sandra B. T.
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“And yes,
music might
be immortal,
but composers
alas are not.
They are easily
silenced, and
even more
easily killed.”

IMAGE: Courtesy of Julian Barnes

THE NOISE OF TIME

by Julian Barnes

Julian Barnes is a British author, born in 1946. After studying Modern Languages and working as a lexicographer for the Oxford English Dictionary supplement, he started working as a reviewer and literary editor in a few magazines. His first novel was published in 1980, and today he has a catalogue of 12 novels, 3 collections of short stories and a huge heap of works of non-fiction. Barnes won the Man Booker Prize for his book *The Sense of an Ending* (2011). He had been nominated for the Man Booker Prize three times before that. In 2011 he received the David Cohen Award for his entire body of work. Some of his best known books are *Flaubert's Parrot* (1984), *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* (1989), *The Lemon Table* (2004) and the memoir *Nothing to Be Frightened Of* (2008).

The Noise of Time is his newest novel, published 2016, and the protagonist of the book is Dmitri Shostakovich, the famous Russian composer.

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906 – 1975) is considered to be one of the most important Russian composers of the 20th century. As he basically worked during Stalin's regime, he had a very complicated relationship with the ruling party. His pieces were forbidden, but also awarded: he was, at the same time, "an enemy of the people", but also the most popular living composer in Russia. The long fight with the Party ended after Stalin's death in 1960, when Shostakovich finally gave in, became a member of the Party and simultaneously also the General Secretary of the Composers' Union. It is believed that he took both titles against his own will. He lost his battle with lung cancer in 1975 and died in Moscow, where he was buried with the highest honors.

Barnes borrowed the title for his newest novel from Osip Mandelstam, a Russian poet who was banished and arrested several times for his frequent critiques against Stalin's dictator-regime. Barnes' book is also directed against dictatorship, through the description of the inner unrest Shostakovich experiences, a man who made the seemingly impossible compromise between free creation and existence.

The Noise of Time consists of three parts. The first one, "On the Landing", finds Shostakovich after

"ART BELONGS TO EVERYBODY AND NOBODY. ART BELONGS TO ALL TIME AND NO TIME. ART BELONGS TO THOSE WHO CREATE IT AND THOSE WHO SAVOUR IT. ART NO MORE BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE AND THE PARTY THAN IT ONCE BELONGED TO THE ARISTOCRACY AND THE PATRON. ART IS THE WHISPER OF HISTORY, HEARD ABOVE THE NOISE OF TIME."



his first forbidden piece, waiting for the visitors from the Party and their verdict. Exile in the best case or, more probably, death – he wouldn't be the first nor the last. The second part, "On the Plane", describes the time after the war, the US-tour and new fights with the Party. "In the Car" takes us to the time after Stalin's death, where we meet Shostakovich as a tired, broken man, without strength to fight against the political pressure.

All these chapters have an salient common theme: they deal with key timeframes in the life of the composer. These traumatic timeframes revolve like a chorus, every 12 years, always in a leap year. And every of those years evokes in Shostakovich the same thought (with which every chapter starts): "All he knew was that this was the worst time."

Through the story of the tragic life of Shostakovich, Barnes actually tells us the allegory about the "murdered artist", or the not so small number of free thinkers around the world who this way or that fell victim to different dictator regimes. About people who were banished, tortured, terrorized or killed for their art. About art that suffered censorship or even worse, self-censorship. About all their anxieties and fears and the influence the dictatorship had on their words, notes or lines.

Shostakovich is no hero and Barnes doesn't try to idealize him. By opening a window into the most intimate thoughts of the famous composer, the author paints us his human side: his egoism, cowardice, apathy, self-pity, "false" suicidal

tendencies, but above all: the love for his music. And it is exactly that commonness of the great composer that makes this novel spectacular and different from other fictionalized biographies.

Shostakovich's dance between his personal ethics and his will to live is what makes him the artist he was. Would his work have been more masterful if he had lived under different circumstances, or did the circumstances he lived in help him to be as masterful as he was? That's a question which will forever remain with no answer.

Julian Barnes already showed his talent for fictionalized biographies with *Flaubert's Parrot*, a book which received several awards. *The Noise of Time*, though without a doubt another masterpiece by the author, is something entirely different. Barnes justified his title of "Chameleon novelist" once more and outdid himself. Not only did he write Shostakovich in a way that makes the reader forget it's fiction and even think one is reading the composer's diary, but the writing style is so "Russian", colored with specific sensibility and melancholy, that it's almost unbelievable it wasn't written by a Russian.

The Noise of Time is, at the same time, a very personal and totally impersonal novel. It's the story of a big composer and of art as such. About what art means to the creator and what power it has when it touches those who have "ears that can hear". About how the creation is bigger than the creator, and how worthy things always find a way to endure, in spite of censorship, pressure and threats.

Welcome back. Welcome home.



FULLER HOUSE

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PLAYSTATION VR

EVERYTHING YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE PRESENT SEAS

Virtual reality is ever more present on the market and aside from devices like Oculus Rift or HTC Vive, which are first and foremost meant for those who have powerful PCs, there is now a VR headset for the bestseller gaming console PS4. Only a few days after its release, we got to test the Playstation VR.

The Playstation VR has a big advantage over PC, because the ecosystem in which the VR has to function is already defined and it leans only on the console or the peripherals that had already been available. While we were putting together a PC for VR, we came to a price of 800 Euros, while a console promises you the same or at least similar experience for half that money. The second advantage (though some will say potentially a problem) is that the games for Playstation VR have to be certified by Sony itself. That limits the developers in a way, but on the other hand it guarantees the players games without problems with framerates and which will give you a good VR experience.

The package we got was a testing unit and it's called a Playstation VR Launch bundle, containing the VR headset, a processor unit, earbuds, all necessary cables, a Playstation camera, two Playstation move controllers and a Playstation VR Worlds demo game. In this case you



only need a PS4 console and you're ready to enter the VR world. The price of this set abroad is a bit high - \$639. If you already own some of the peripherals – the Playstation camera or the Move controllers, you can opt for the standard set, which contains only the headset, the processor unit, the earbuds and cables which costs only \$399. Though both prices may seem high, you should have in mind that other headsets aren't any cheaper, on the contrary – Oculus Rift, which has everything the standard PS VR has, costs \$699, while the HTC Vive which could be compared to the launch bundle costs \$899. Add to that that the PS4 is half the price

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ITSELF

of a PC which fulfills the VR characteristics and you'll see that this is, at the moment, the cheapest version to get VR, even if you have to start from scratch.

The connection of the device works similarly to other devices – you can of course connect it to a TV set via HDMI cable so that others can see

VR

SON KICKS IN



what's going on in the VR. The Playstation camera is necessary for the headset to work and we have to praise the fact that the cable of the headset contains a little control "station" where you can turn the device on and off and regulate the volume. Our only critique goes at the earbuds, which provide decent sound, but to immerse yourself in the VR, you need better headphones that cover your ears totally.

In the end, we come to the headset itself. It has a full HD 1920*1080p screen (960*1080 per eye) and in that sense it's up there with all the other devices on the market. What separates it from the rest is the design, where you can see how much attention was put into the device, and it looks like something from the movie Tron. The retro-futuristic look is nice and we especially liked how it glows blue when you turn it on. It's especially important to point out that the design isn't there only for aesthetics, but for functionality and comfort during the use of the headset, and we'd say it's on a higher level than the competition. Other than the rest, who use some kind of elastic headband to hold the headset on your head, PS VR has some kind of elastic plastic which can be opened up and held in

THE RETRO-FUTURISTIC LOOK IS NICE AND WE ESPECIALLY LIKED HOW IT GLOWS BLUE WHEN YOU TURN IT ON

place, which means it won't push against your head during long periods of play and that can be a really big relief. You can also adjust the distance of the eyes and the top of your forehead, which means that the device will fit everyone, no matter what form their head has. The rubber on the sides might not be as comfortable as the sponges on other devices, but this one looks more durable.

We also have to critique the fact that the PS VR uses some already very old technologies which could have been updated. We, of course, mean the Playstation camera and Move controllers – they're simply not on the tracking levels the HTC Vive ones provide (we can't talk about Oculus controllers, since we didn't have a chance to test the new ones). Some games are simply easier to play with a standard PS controller, which sets the VR a bit back, but we expect Sony to work on that.

WHAT DOES VR ON A CONSOLE LOOK LIKE?

Our biggest concern was if PS has enough processor and graphic power to deal with the challenges of VR. PCs which are recommended for VR are much stronger and not all games for PS4 have a fixed FPS on 60. The fall in the number of frames per second is much more noticeable in VR and they can cause big problems for the user. What surprised us pleasantly was that none of the games we tested have this problem and that they were released with the idea to present the VR on PS at its best. Maybe visually they're not all like they could look on a PC, but in a graphic sense they give you a very adequate experience.

And here we come to the problem that plagues VR as such at the moment – lack of content and specific unsolved problems like movement. So most of the games are "onrails" shooting games, adventures or other kinds of games like logical games. You're simply limited to

sitting in a chair, or in a cockpit or somewhere else where your position is fixed in the relative space frame, because otherwise you'd be getting sick. PS VR doesn't do anything worse or better than others here and that's why you're limited to a few kinds of games, different technological demo's or just 360 videos.

CONCLUSION

Playstation VR is, at the moment, the best alternative to enter the world of VR, simply because its price is lower and you get full functionality. But we still have the impression that VR is still just a buzzword, something everyone is talking about as something great and cool, but aside from a few really good demo's we still can't find the "killer app" that would make this technology so addictive that millions of gamers worldwide would just have to try it and then stay connected.

by: Kristina Z.
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The Sopranos

A MOBSTER IN PANIC

We are aware how much we sometimes fall for the charm of the bad boys. We love Dexter, our favourite serial killer, we love Hank Moody, the casanova and sex addict.

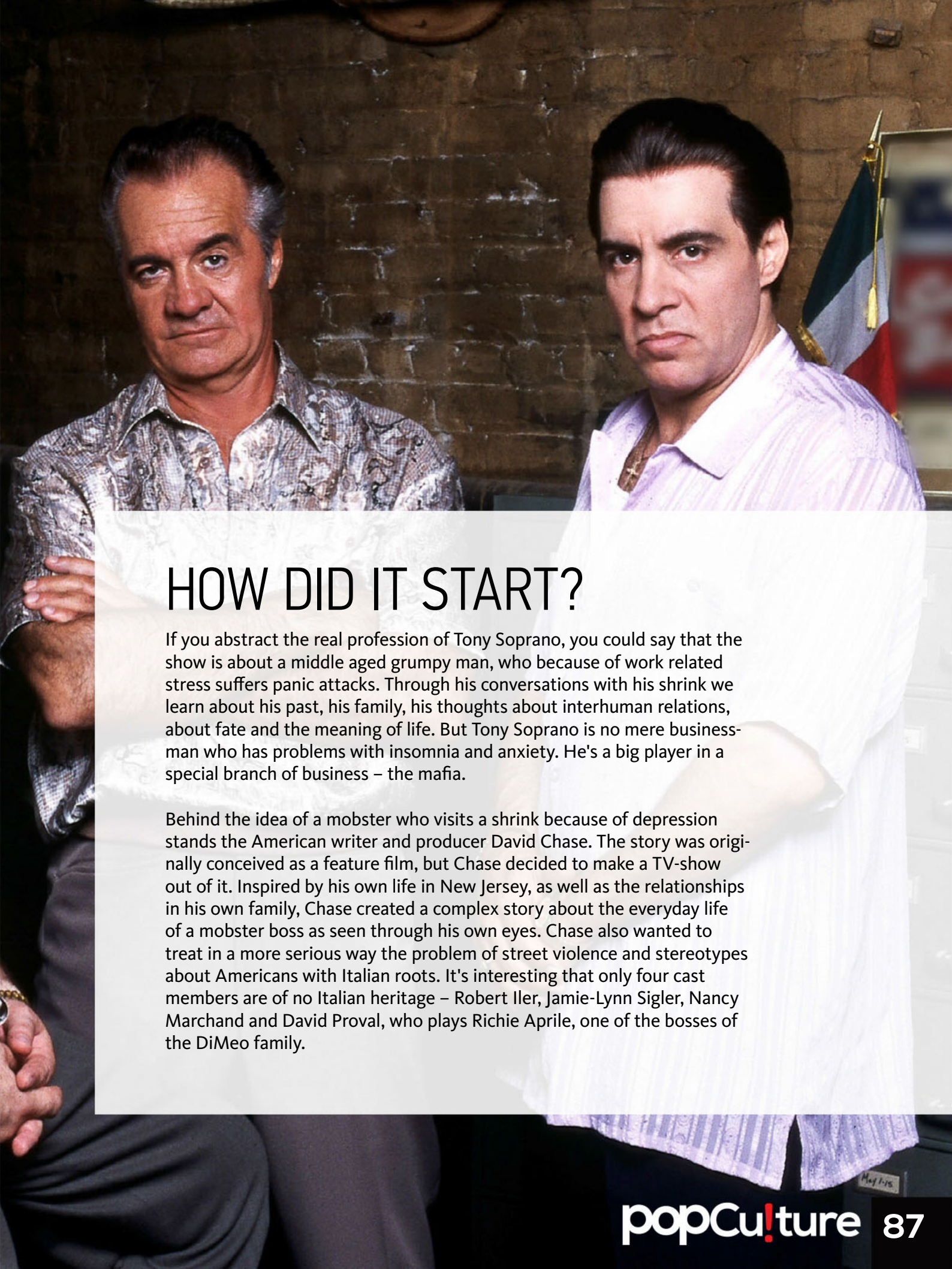
We love blooddrinkers, werewolves, impressive characters who stand out with funny or wise lines and who don't stop surprising us with their versatility from episode to episode. When behind such a good character also stands a good actor, you've got a recipe for a TV-show that's going to last for years. Those are shows we mourn when they end, we remember them, we quote them, we look forward to reruns. Quality TV gets rewarded by the audience with loyalty, and when prestigious film institutes and critics praise them, too, we feel a bit proud.





INSPIRED BY HIS OWN
LIFE IN NEW JERSEY,
AS WELL AS THE
RELATIONSHIPS IN HIS
OWN FAMILY, CHASE
CREATED A COMPLEX
STORY ABOUT THE
EVERYDAY LIFE OF A
MOBSTER BOSS AS
SEEN THROUGH HIS
OWN EYES

IMAGE: Courtesy of HBO Adria



HOW DID IT START?

If you abstract the real profession of Tony Soprano, you could say that the show is about a middle aged grumpy man, who because of work related stress suffers panic attacks. Through his conversations with his shrink we learn about his past, his family, his thoughts about interhuman relations, about fate and the meaning of life. But Tony Soprano is no mere businessman who has problems with insomnia and anxiety. He's a big player in a special branch of business – the mafia.

Behind the idea of a mobster who visits a shrink because of depression stands the American writer and producer David Chase. The story was originally conceived as a feature film, but Chase decided to make a TV-show out of it. Inspired by his own life in New Jersey, as well as the relationships in his own family, Chase created a complex story about the everyday life of a mobster boss as seen through his own eyes. Chase also wanted to treat in a more serious way the problem of street violence and stereotypes about Americans with Italian roots. It's interesting that only four cast members are of no Italian heritage – Robert Iler, Jamie-Lynn Sigler, Nancy Marchand and David Proval, who plays Richie Aprile, one of the bosses of the DiMeo family.



GOOD OR BAD GUY?

Tony Soprano (James Gandolfini) is a capo in the DiMeo crime family from New Jersey. The author placed the story there to get a contrast to the vast number of stories that play out in New York City. The title sequence, accompanied by the song „Woke Up This Morning“ shows Tony driving the streets of New York, crossing to New Jersey and parking in front of his suburban home. When he exits the car, he turns from mafia boss to family father, but for someone who chose that particular way, life will never be easy. Stretched between the two families, which are equally important to him, Tony starts feeling the results of the stress he's exposed to every day. As the anti-hero with a bad conscience, who always sleeps with one eye open, he starts re-evaluating his priorities and becomes depressed. As he himself doesn't understand what's going on, he instinctively looks for help by a shrink, who is – to his horror – a woman.

The neurotic criminal whose arms are drenched in blood up to his elbows, has in the beginning problems to open up to someone who he thinks belongs in the kitchen or bed. On the other hand, Dr. Jennifer Melfi has a challenge in front of her she couldn't even imagine. With every session, she learns more about the shady work of her client, she understands that her life is now in danger and that she can't do anything about it except wait for everything to unfold. With time, their relationship becomes one of the focus points of the show. Jennifer becomes the prism through which we see the true nature of Tony Soprano, the attempts of humanity to breach through the hull of the killer. Their relationship sometimes reminds us of a platonic love, which never gets closer, due to the vast differences between them. The responsibility towards the families comes first and Tony won't let anything cross his path in that sense.





THE SOPRANO FAMILY

The core of the Soprano family are Tony, his wife and two kids. From the outside, their home looks like a normal, well-off family home in the suburbs. Behind closed doors, the topics discussed during the meals sound like normal family discussions, but underneath everyone is very much aware who puts the food on the table and how.

TONY SOPRANO (JAMES GANDOLFINI)

Life in the mafia is the only life he knows. He was introduced to the job by his father, who didn't have problems to beat up people owing him money in front of little Tony. A manipulative, suspicious and ruthless mother Livia (Nancy Marchand) is one of the reasons Tony visits his shrink so often. When she learns that Tony wants to put her in a home, she tries to order his murder. Tony isn't someone you'd want for a neighbor. He doesn't even hesitate and kills his daughter's boyfriend.

James Gandolfini is a veteran of American cinema. True Romance, Crimson Tide, 8mm, The Mexican – those are only a few of the hit movies he was in. As Tony Soprano he got three Emmy's and a Golden Globe.

CARMELA SOPRANO (EDIE FALCO)

Carmela is a housewife, stretched between her wish to leave her unfaithful husband and the luxury life with him offers. Her attempts at demanding a divorce usually end by him buying her a new Porsche or expensive jewelry. Her love for the children is something else that motivates her to keep living under the threat of Tony's job.

She's played by Edie Falco. Though she is in the acting business since the late eighties, it was the role of Carmela that made her famous. After The Sopranos, she played in the show Nurse Jackie.

ANTHONY SOPRANO, JR. (DAVID ILER)

The popular A. J. is all but an exemplary son and a worthy successor to his father. He broke into his school, crashed the car of his mother while driving high on marijuana, until it was found that he suffers from ADHD and later on from panic attacks like his father. Not even attending military school can fix his problems. As with Carmela, Tony tries to solve his son's problems by buying him new cars.

He's played by Robert Iler who after The Sopranos didn't have any roles worth mentioning.

MEADOW SOPRANO (JAMIE-LYNN SIGLER)

Smart, spoiled, carefree. From season to season she matures and gets aware of the circumstances and people she lives with. She learns about relationships between people in real life the hard way. At the beginning she wants to be a doctor, but decides to study law instead.

She's played by Jamie-Lynn Sigler, who after The Sopranos played in Entourage, Ugly Betty and Guys with Kids.

DR. JENNIFER MELFI (LORRAINE BRACCO)

A psychiatrist who has the luck to have a local mafia boss as a patient. She tries to soothe the stress she finds herself under with alcohol and medication. Though she's not blood-related to the Sopranos, she can be viewed as a full family member. The closeness between her and Tony leads him to trust her more than Carmela.

Lorraine Bracco was at first offered to play Carmela, which she declined, as she already had a big mafia-wife role in Martin Scorsese's Goodfellas.





DIMEO FAMILY

The DiMeo crime family was, as described in the show, formed in New Jersey in the 50s. The Sopranos, including Tony's uncle and father, had a key role in the DiMeo Family business from the start. The series is partly inspired by the Boiardo family, a prominent New Jersey organized crime family when Chase was growing up, and partly on New Jersey's DeCavalcante family. Prominent members of the family, with whom Tony

shares good and evil, are Christopher Moltisanti (Michael Imperioli), Silvio Dante (Steven Van Zandt), Paulie Gualtieri (Tony Sirico), Salvatore Bonpensiero (Vincent Pastore), Ralph Cifaretto (Joe Pantoliano). They're bound by the code of honor and loyalty to the Family, but many of them fall victim to their own ambitions and wrong moves.



HOW DID IT END?

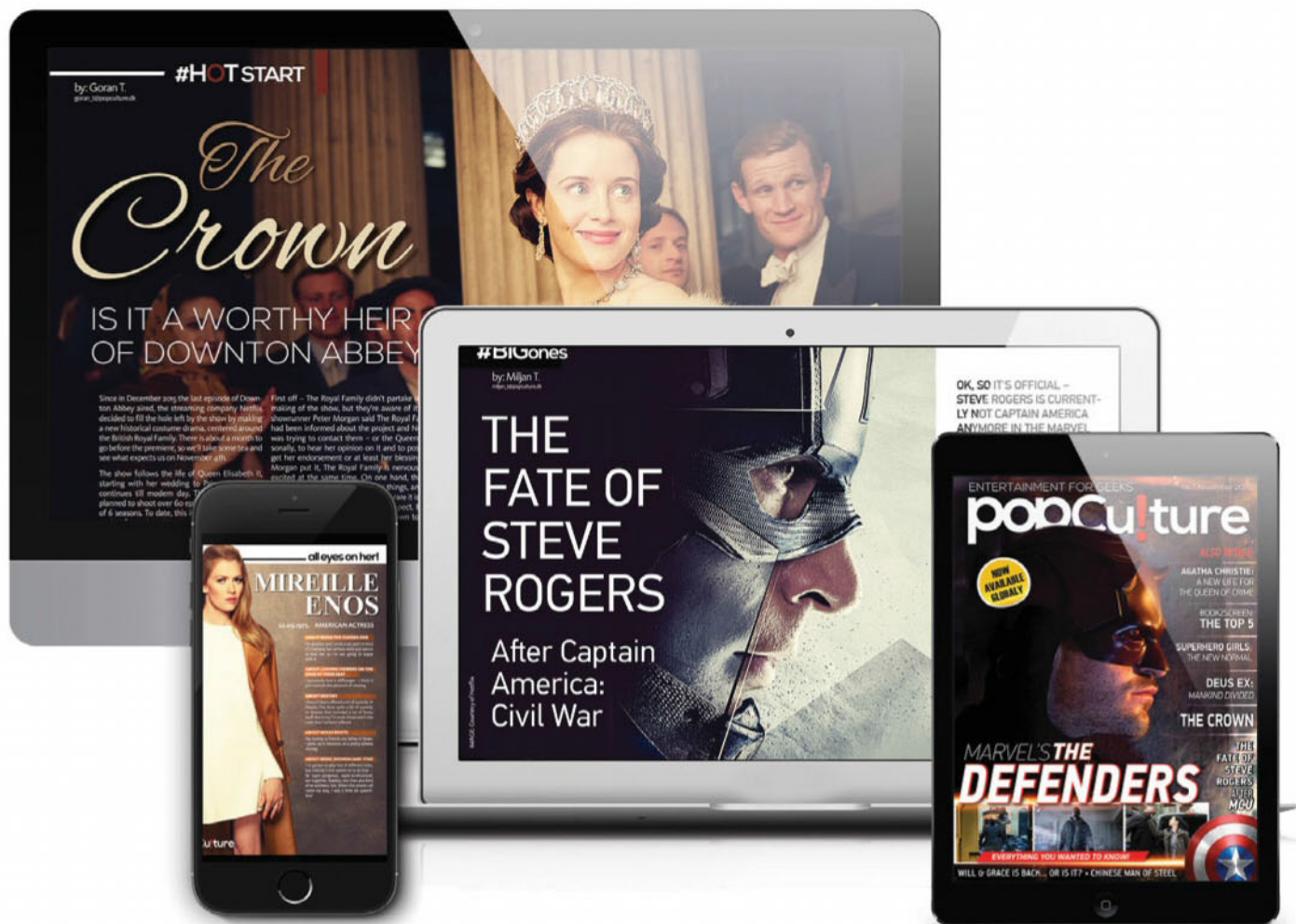
It ended abruptly, unexpectedly and in the dark. The Sopranos meet for dinner in a restaurant. While they wait for everyone to arrive, they order snacks and seem happy. Everything happening around them serves as a contrast to this peaceful family gathering. At neighboring tables, there are suspicious grumpy men. The screen goes dark. A few moments in silence and darkness, and then the end credits role. Many viewers thought that their TV set is broken, that there is no cable signal or electricity.

When it became clear that this is really how the show ends, David Chase had a lot to explain. But he decided to remain mysterious about the fate of Tony Soprano. "Is Tony dead? Let's be frank – the show lasted for seven seasons. Did we really need to conclude that crime doesn't pay off? In all those years we saw that it does pay off. Something else is more important than the question if Tony is dead or not. The whole show was about the fragility of time we got in this world. I wanted to show how short and precious life is, and the only way to do that was to take it from my characters."

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